

ANGLO- SOVIET JOURNAL

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Journal of the Society for Cultural Relations with the USSR

A MUCH-NEEDED EXPLANATION

Ilya Ehrenburg

THERE is nothing particularly surprising about the current periodic outburst of anti-Soviet and anti-communist hysteria the politicians are indulging in, or in the press hysteria. What *is* surprising is the attitude of many notable cultural figures in the West who are hardly to be described as supporters of capitalism.

I am not thinking of those western intellectuals who have been trying for the last ten years to adopt a position of neutrality as between capitalist society and socialist. Neutrality may in some states be justified, with the world divided by military blocs. But neutrality of mind, heart or conscience does not exist and never did.

When I say I am surprised at the attitude of some western intellectual circles, I am thinking of those who have reiterated their disbelief in spiritual neutrality and their sense of the unreality of any "third force" between the capitalist world and the socialist. I am not so much concerned to criticise those who have turned their backs not only on yesterday's friends, but on what had inspired them, for the sake of effect, as to talk to them about what matters most, the fate of humanity and of culture. I do not think that it is in recent events, serious as these may have been, that the sources of their confusion lie. As long ago as last summer, in reading western journals and talking to western intellectuals, I could sense doubts and a growing *malaise*. Seeing us condemn the errors of our past, some writers, scientists and artists were beginning to doubt every achievement of Soviet society and culture.

In this complex and puzzling age one's gaze must be far-reaching and penetrating. There is nothing ephemeral about Soviet culture. It is a vast historical phenomenon, not to be brushed aside in a fit of pique or misery. Writing a pamphlet may unburden one's soul, but a pamphlet directed against a great idea is bound to prove a lampoon.

Five years ago, simply everything Soviet, poor novels, stupid films and all, was admired by some of the western literati who today cast doubt on all the indubitable achievements of Soviet culture. They are like adolescents crossed in love. Many fine works of Soviet culture have made a contribution to the world; but I have often wondered, when reading some rave article on a second-rate novel, or on some mediocre painter's vast canvases, or on *The Fall of Berlin*, how people who love and understand art can possibly enjoy such products. Many of these unbalanced enthusiasts are now beginning to talk about serious shortcomings in Soviet literature and culture.

Socialism is not a religion. It is based on reason, conscience, science and the sense of justice that is vital to mankind. Love of Soviet society or culture can have nothing to do with any dogma of perfect purity or with rigid adherence to the tables of the law. The western intellectuals who raved about us yesterday, and today, when we say we are making amends for former mistakes, begin to doubt the basis of their feelings, show their spiritual immaturity by their behaviour. Thought is not a flirtatious girl to be satisfied with an hour's wooing. It demands conscious activity. We do not intend to give up criticising our shortcomings and mistakes just because it may disturb or possibly perturb certain westerners. We do not need a love that is "blind"; we need the love that comes from the mind, the sort that our people and culture deserve.

Among western intellectuals now feeling upset there are some whose sincerity and steadfastness are undoubted. Indignant at the anti-communist

campaign, they are all the same confused by the fact that some of these attacks coincide with their private thoughts.

They would like to consider the matter as a whole, but their thoughts repeatedly return to particular details. In talking to writers from France, Italy and other western countries I could sense a profound trauma ; they kept going back over some false piece of writing, some stupid film or other from ten years back. At the time they had not liked the novel or film, but then an unsuccessful work of art was just an hour's annoyance and that was that. Today their thoughts keep going back to their earlier impressions. They worry over them and try to draw general conclusions. Like anyone else, they are constantly subjected to environmental influences. They forget that you have to stand back a few paces if you wish to see the proportions of a building. They appear incapable of taking a deep breath of history. In 1956 we criticised the stupid books or films of 1950. We did this so as to be able to write better books and make better films. Many western intellectuals have considered our criticisms, and remember that they did not like that novel or such and such a film. They rush into explanations of why novels showing life "smooth as velvet", or "full-dress" films like fairy stories, should have appeared in our country. In thus seeking reasons, many devoted socialist intellectuals tend unconsciously to repeat the assertions of their enemies.

All our successes and all our failures are attributable to the fact that we are building a new house and must not be content with repairing the old. We are writing, not re-writing ; it is not so difficult to change the position of the furniture or to put up new wallpaper. It is easy to walk a well-trodden path. History has expected something different from us ; we were the first to tread a new path.

If we look without irritation or haste at the West today, we will see that all that is finest there is linked either with the new forces seeking to take their people along a new path, or with the inertia of a great past. By the new forces I mean those who see about them spiritual stagnation, hypocrisy and alarmism. By the inertia of the past I mean the high level of technique, craftsmanship and wealth of cultural tradition. It is more difficult to discover than to invent, and more difficult to invent than to perfect what already exists.

To a man, forty years is a long time, the greater part of his life. To history, forty years is but a moment.

A stranger can be given a wrong address, which will make him waste his day. A railway line can be smashed, causing the deaths of hundreds of people. But history cannot be turned back.

Western intellectuals should look at the world as a whole, at past and future struggle, in those hours when those who ponder are filled with doubt. They, like us, are chiefly worried about the fate of the spiritual wealth left us by preceding ages, which we seek to enrich and pass on to succeeding generations. For the writer, the scientist and the artist, the fate of culture is not merely a question of his own speciality. It is bound up with an awareness of human life, its reasoning and its aspirations.

Being a writer, I am going to deal mainly with literary phenomena. But this is not an article about literature. Western writers are pointing out the desirability of exchanging talks. Anyone may deal with any theme he pleases in a friendly talk. Acute as current political problems are, a talk on wider themes may help us to assess them. Under the pressure of events, some western writers today are filled with doubts. It is worth while to talk not only about what gave rise to their doubts, but about what they are questioning. In these days of fierce polemic, impassioned accusations and hasty generalisations, I am glad to grasp the opportunity to express my views on the development of Soviet culture.

Western art : likes and dislikes

A country teacher wrote to me as follows : “ We follow what is happening in literature attentively, and argue about it. Could you help me with a few questions ? I recently went to Tula to do a job, and there I heard a lecture on literature. The speaker declared that a great deal was being said about fighting bourgeois ideology, and that we should draw the necessary conclusions. When I told my colleagues about this, R threw up her hands and said, ‘ That means that novels like *The Quiet American* won’t be published any more ! ’ We get *Foreign Literature* regularly, and we all like Greene’s novel. There have been some other good novels in it too, by Remarque, Hemingway and others. I had an argument with R. It seemed to me a ridiculous conclusion to draw. Our deputy head considers that one must fight the infiltration of bourgeois ideology into Soviet literature. I simply cannot understand this. I follow the journals and read a great deal, but I have never noticed any bourgeois ideology. I expect more from Soviet literature ; there aren’t enough worthwhile and profound books. I know one shouldn’t really criticise that way, and such books would be difficult to write, but I can’t help dreaming about it, as we all do. We are thirty miles from the nearest district town, and books are everything to us.”

This reader’s questions touch on the theme I have raised, and I will do my best to answer her. I am not writing this article for my western readers only. It is even more important for the Soviet writer to talk to the Soviet reader.

How often must it be stated and restated that ideological differences need not be obstacles to cultural collaboration ? It has never been considered that peaceful co-existence and peaceful collaboration between states with different systems involve a refusal to fight the battle of ideas. It is possible to hold different philosophic concepts and have different views on how cultural life could develop, without destroying cities, organising plots, sending in spies or heaping the ideological enemy with vulgar insults. Among the physicists who discussed the peaceful uses of atomic energy two years ago there were undoubtedly people with differing political convictions. The possibility of collaboration among them nevertheless produces new prospects not only of scientific development, but also for the well-being of all peoples. The foreign visits of the Moscow Ballet or the Peking Opera widen the outlook of many English and French people. These visits enriched their spiritual world and were not prevented by the existing profound differences between the two worlds. I was as pleased as my correspondent to see a number of excellent novels by western authors translated here. I am sure we shall continue to translate important work by foreign writers, even if they differ from us on various basic questions. Exhibitions of the paintings of India, France, England, Belgium and other countries have been held in Moscow ; the public liked some of the canvases and disliked others. But when a visitor looked at a landscape that moved him he did not stop to wonder whether the man who had painted it was an idealist or a materialist.

Ideological discussions and diplomatic negotiations should be regarded as on different planes. Our approach to American science, English literature or French painting must not depend on the mood in which Mr. Dulles woke up, what speech Mr Selwyn Lloyd made or what Ministers there may be in France and where their gaze is turned.

I am very fond of many contemporary American writers like Hemingway, Caldwell, Faulkner, Steinbeck, Fast and Saroyan. I am glad that many of their books have been translated into Russian and that Soviet readers have liked them. Can this possibly mean that therefore we shall cease to fight against racism, so widespread in America, against the inhuman theories of Vogt or against any scientists or writers who favour the brutal morality of “ free com-

petition"? I think highly of the paintings of Picasso, Matisse, Rouault, Marquet, Léger, Braque and many other artists. The blind and mechanical imitation of some of Picasso and Braque has caused a proliferation of abstract art, which I find inhuman and which I shall continue to fight. I value the work of many present-day French writers, and do my best to ensure that Soviet readers get to know their books. But I find much in French literature unacceptable and anti-humanist, the work of authors who concentrate on every form of human distortion and perversion.

"Kow-towing"

I do not like talking of the mistakes we have corrected. It is much more important to dwell on those that still need correcting and are hindering the development of our culture. But there is one past mistake that I wish to recall. Seven or eight years ago there used to be a lot of talk about the struggle against "kow-towing". The struggle was fought in many ways: pastrycooks hastily renamed pastries; literary historians proved that neither Indian fables nor the Greek epics could possibly have percolated to us and that no Russian author could possibly have been influenced by Shakespeare, Molière or La Fontaine; dramatists showed up Soviet scientists, composers and architects for being abject devotees of Weissmann, jazz or skyscrapers. The struggle was energetically fought. Yet no one was capable of explaining with any great clarity who or what they were fighting.

In the last months of the war I often talked to our officers and men in Germany. Some used to say that the Germans built good houses, others that the Czechs were better at publishing books than we were. No one was falling for bourgeois ideology. Where was the "kow-towing" to the West? Was it just the fact that our drivers approved of American cars or that Moscow fashionables liked foreign sweaters? Was this not rather a recognition of the western countries' level of technique than of their ideology?

As for Shakespeare or Rembrandt or Stendhal, however low we bow to them there is nothing demeaning in that.

It is not without interest that it was precisely while we were fighting the "kow-towing" that we showed some rotten western films which were far from being works of art and had a bad influence on children and teenagers, such films as *Tarzan* and so forth.

I firmly believe that politicians in the West do not care at all for cultural exchanges between West and East, although on formal occasions they often speak of the need for such exchanges. When we started translating many western authors, and when the number of visits paid to our country by foreign artists and those of our artists to the West increased, they got very upset.

In the past two or three years many translations of the work of western authors have appeared, exhibitions of foreign art have been held and foreign theatre companies have played here. Our readers and audiences have shown great interest in the culture of the peoples of the West. But I have not observed any attitude of "kow-towing". It is quite natural for Soviet readers to like the work of Hemingway, Greene, Remarque, Caldwell and so on, for these are really worth-while books. It is noteworthy that they have been far more moved by works by young Soviet authors, artistically weak but dealing with the problems of our day and age. It is not surprising that our audiences should value the craftsmanship of the Théâtre Populaire National. (Moreover, people of the older generation who saw their performances recollected productions by Meierhold, Vakhtangov and Tairov, who had affected the development of French theatre.) I heard heated arguments at the Picasso exhibition. Similar heated arguments take place at exhibitions of this artist's work in Paris, London or Rome. Some of our painters are enthusiastic about Picasso's crafts-

manship and speak reverently of the complexity of a painter's job. But it is unlikely that anybody felt inclined to rush away and paint a canvas *à la Picasso*. Of course there is something to be learnt from Picasso, as from any great master, but one should not imitate him ; his work very clearly bears the mark of his individual genius, as well as that of the tragic world he lives in.

Whatever the views of Caldwell, Mauriac or Moravia on communism, they are real writers, and so carry no banner for the capitalist world. On the contrary, they expose its terrible sores. It is a long time since I read an artistically important foreign novel or saw a good foreign film that did not reflect the irretrievable tragedy of bourgeois society. These novels have no slogans or fine moral endings. All of them bear witness to the necessity to move towards new human relationships and a new form of society.

Through western eyes

Western illwishers are always ready to dwell upon an artistically weak novel. They dislike saying anything about the great contribution Soviet scientists, writers and artists have made to world culture. A year ago Georges Duhamel said that up to 1917 Russia had given the world great scientists, writers and composers, but that when she had "turned away from the West" her culture had died.

It is true that Soviet literature had no Leo Tolstoy. Yet, pleasant as are some of Duhamel's stories, he is neither a Balzac nor a Stendhal. France has not turned away from the "West". On the contrary, she studies it fairly intently. And yet in the past forty years no writers have appeared in France or in other western European countries equal in profundity and depth to the greater writers of the past.

Several years ago I wrote that it was much more difficult for an artist to depict a society that was growing and changing than one that had already been formed and had had time to become complete.

Sometimes misfortune befalls a Soviet novelist because he does not know his heroes sufficiently well or profoundly. The reasons for the failures of western literature are different. Only too often do we note the search for the spiritually exotic, for a cult of the exceptional or even pathological. There is sometimes an impression that a given author is bored with describing what his predecessors have already described. In the search for the new he forgets the direct obligation of the author : to depict humankind, to defend and elevate humanity.

Not for a moment do I claim that Soviet writers or artists have given as much as they might have done. Let me give you my views of our past and of the obstacles to our cultural development.

I hesitate to speak of the successes of Soviet science, since this should rather be done by someone better informed. But I have had the opportunity to talk to leading western scientists, many of whom are far from sympathetic towards communism. All of them have spoken with great respect of the work of Soviet physicists and mathematicians. Those who award the Nobel prizes do not sin in excessive love of the Soviet Union. If a Soviet chemist wins a Nobel prize, is it not in spite of being Soviet rather than because of it ?

Can anyone honestly speak about contemporary music without mentioning Prokofiev and Shostakovich among the foremost ? Can anyone deny the vast influence of Eisenstein, Pudovkin and Dovzhenko on the development of advanced western cinema ?

I have read dozens of articles by western writers and journalists who are

eager to prove that Soviet literature simply does not exist. They repeat the allegation too often and too heatedly for me to be able to credit their sincerity. What worries them is not the absence of Soviet literature but its incontestable presence.

“The publication of books by such distinguished writers as Babel, Bagritsky and Ilf and Petrov has long since ceased in the Soviet Union”, declares an Italian writer. “If literature once existed in the Soviet Union, it was only until 1934”, a third-rate French critic remarks condescendingly. “Soviet novels are superficial and false, and they pursue the sole aim of gilding Soviet characters”, claims an American journalist.

It is true that Babel was not published for nearly twenty years; and re-issues of the poetry of Bagritsky or the satirical novels of Ilf and Petrov were few and far between. If the Italian writer who mentioned this were to look through our magazines and newspapers he would see that we complained about it before he did. It is one of the mistakes which, since the twentieth Congress, cannot be repeated. It is absurd and dishonest to ascribe such mistakes to the nature of Soviet society; they are bound up with the flouting of the principles on which Soviet society is founded. Irrespective of the differences in their creative individuality, Babel, Bagritsky, and Ilf and Petrov were all deeply Soviet writers who drew their inspiration from the Soviet people. Babel's fate was tragic; he was slandered and ruined by base people. His works are soon to reappear, and everyone who reads them will see how close he came to the Soviet outlook; it is dishonest to set him up in contrast to other Soviet writers.

It is not true that Soviet literature was vigorous until 1934 and then declined. The work of writers cannot be divided into short periods. The great Soviet writers wrote fine books both before and after 1934. Suffice it to mention Alexei Tolstoy, Sholokhov, Prishvin, Fadeyev, Babel, Fedin, Tynyanov, Leonov, Paustovsky and Katayev. Not in French literature nor British nor American was the second world war, in my opinion, so profoundly and humanly reflected as in Soviet literature. Books by Panova, Nekrasov, Grossman, Kazakevich and Bek have been translated into dozens of languages, and on many occasions I have heard the warmest and most heartfelt of words about these books from readers in other countries.

Not all Soviet writers “gilded their characters”. As for the bad Soviet novels, their weakness lay in the fact that some mediocre authors in their eagerness to gild their characters often belittled and impoverished the spiritual world of Soviet man.

In a young society, poetry always outstrips prose. Soviet poetry, from Mayakovsky to Martynov, from Yesenin to Tvardovsky, from Pasternak to Zabolotsky, from Bagritsky to Smelyakov, from Kupala to Tychina, from Titsian Tabidze to Samed Vurgun, from Isaakyan to Markish, has been richer than that of any other country during the last forty years.

We need not blush to face our western ill-wishers. Their attempts to sweep aside Soviet literature, and indeed the whole of Soviet culture, are simply stupid. The western intellectual circles now experiencing a certain inner confusion know our contribution to world culture very well. They will say, perhaps, that they would like to see a still greater contribution. So should we. We are by no means enraptured by our achievements. When the Soviet school-mistress writes that we are short of good books, her words are not unfounded. She has a right to say so—*she*, not the critic of *Figaro Littéraire*.

We can look back with pride; but I want to look ahead. To sit at one's desk is harder but happier than listening to anniversary greetings. Today, when too often we hear unfounded charges, we must not mark time but go calmly on. We must think seriously about what it is that sometimes hinders our progress.

After looking round his Moscow hotel room, with its old-fashioned furniture, the vases on the what-nots and the bronze paper-weight on the desk, Carlo Levi, the Italian writer, said that it took him back to the Piedmont of his childhood. When I was at the "Geneva meetings" last year, and at the assembly of the European Cultural Society in Venice not long ago, I too felt that it took me back to the Moscow of my childhood.

In Geneva and Venice highly educated men and women spoke on the significance of culture, on Joyce, on existentialism and on abstract painting. Neither the Genevans nor the Venetians showed any interest in these debates. The peasants of southern Italy so well depicted by Carlo Levi have not read his books. When I was in Alabama and Mississippi ten years ago and talked to local intellectuals, doctors, lawyers, engineers, I found that they did not even know the names of the famous American authors who have written about life in the south—Steinbeck, Caldwell, Faulkner.

I clearly remember Moscow at the beginning of this century. The members of the Free Aesthetics Circle used to discuss the poetry of Mallarmé, mystical anarchy, and anthroposophy. The ladies were engrossed in the novels of Pshybishevsky and raved over Bocklin or Stuck postcard reproductions. I spent my childhood at a small factory in the Khamovniki District, where my father was employed. Leo Tolstoy lived in the house next to the factory. The seasonal workers knew that Count Tolstoy was a famous writer, but I doubt whether any of them had read his novels; most of them were illiterate, and those who were not read only the local events column in *Moskovsky Listok*. Working in Russia at that time were Chekhov and Pavlov, Gorky and Scriabin, Bunin and Mechnikov, Stanislavsky and Blok; and 77% of Russia's population could not read or write.

What happened after the October revolution? Some of the members of the Free Aesthetics Circle went abroad; others, having discovered the hardships of life, forgot about anthroposophy. People abroad thought that Russian culture had given up the ghost.

At the beginning of 1923 Lenin wrote: "While we have been talking about proletarian culture and its relations to bourgeois culture, the facts present us with figures showing that even with regard to bourgeois culture matters are in a very poor way in our country." According to statistical data for 1920, two-thirds of the population was still illiterate.

Thirty years later the Soviet Union adopted a decision to go over from compulsory primary education to compulsory secondary education. This not only shows how far we have advanced, but signifies a genuine transition to socialist culture.

Universal elementary education, the introduction of which was begun in the West a century ago, reflected the aspirations of the nineteenth century. It enabled many gifted persons from the lower classes of society to become scientists, writers and artists. To some extent it erased the distinction between the educated upper stratum of society and the millions of illiterates or semi-literates. Some welcomed it as a guarantee of progress, others because a literate worker would operate a machine faster and with more precision than an illiterate. The door had been opened a crack, but it was still hard to pass through the crack.

I want to remind the reader that our young people finish secondary school at the age of eighteen, by which time habits of thinking, a love of reading and the ability to think critically have been formed. Books have become a necessity for our people. At the book discussions arranged by district libraries, readers of different trades and occupations take the floor; a college student is followed by a factory mechanic, and a woman physician by a textile-mill

operator. They are able to debate with one another ; they are not separated by the gap that divides the western intellectuals from the people.

We all marvel at the art of ancient Greece. In Athens of the Golden Age there were nine slaves to every freeman. The slaves were the guarantee of prosperity and leisure and the flowering of culture. The same situation obtained in India in the times of Kalidasa and the temples of Ellora. Racine wrote his tragedies for a small circle of aristocrats. In those days 900 people lived a dim and almost primitive life so that 100 others could believe and doubt, rest and struggle, think and love. Soviet society is the first to have brought culture within the reach of the whole people.

It is clear to everyone that at first any broadening of culture occurs at the expense of depth. The man taking a book into his hands for the first time does not grasp many of the fine points of psychology, the depth of ideas or the literary beauties of novels like *War and Peace* or *Le Rouge et le Noir*. Reading, like perception in painting or music, demands a reciprocal creative effort by the person reading, listening or looking, and creative effort of this kind is bound up with general cultural development. Taste is formed slowly. When I used to talk to readers in the twenties, and in the thirties too, for that matter, I often heard opinions that were naive and too downright. Even at the time of the first writers' congress there were authors who confessed to me that the crudity of many readers frightened them.

More than twenty years have passed since then. These have been years of sorrow and hope, of work and reflection. Today it is not the writers who are frightened by the crudity of the readers, but the readers who often laugh bitterly at the crudity of some play or novel.

Monkey-puzzle style

Now let me touch on another sphere, architecture. A good many buildings in eclectic style have been erected in our country ; in their desire to decorate the buildings some architects showed neither taste nor sense of proportion, nor did they allow for the spirit of the times. How did this come about ? In the twenties the constructivists predominated among Soviet architects. Their failures were due to many circumstances. There was a shortage of good-quality building materials ; and the barer an object, the better should be the material. There is always a lot of decorative work on cheap cigarette cases and boxes. The walls of the buildings put up by the constructivists in Novosibirsk or Sverdlovsk soon became blotched and cracked. Also many architects built houses as manifestoes or declarations are written, on correct principles carried to the point of absurdity. The buildings looked drab ; people called them "coffins". The artistic tastes of the public were still undeveloped, and the eclectic decorative architecture held sway for a while. Now we are seeing a healthy public reaction. The point is not that the Government has criticised the waste of space in certain buildings, but that people's standards have risen ; they have become more discriminating, they want architecture to be plainer, more in tune with the times.*

Of course, there are different levels of general development and of aesthetic development in particular. I do not think, however, that literature or art can be divided into zones, with certain zones for the connoisseurs and others for all the rest. Each writer and each artist wants to be understood : poetry is not a crossword puzzle and paintings are not riddles. This does not, of course, mean that every work of art has to be understood and accepted by everybody the moment it comes out. I well remember how people laughed when Mayakovsky recited his *Man* at the Polytechnical Museum. But now there is a

* See *Soviet Architecture Bulletin*, Vol. IV, Nos. 1/2.

square in Moscow named after Mayakovsky. But it is clear that the evolution of poetic subjects, images and forms cannot stop at Mayakovsky. The symphonies of Shostakovich are more difficult to grasp than songs from films, but this does not mean that difficult music lies outside the cultural world of the general public. Admittedly some of our writers and artists took the line of least resistance and endeavoured as it were to develop low tastes. But besides the mediocre novels, the readers have had Tolstoy and Gorky and Sholokhov ; besides the pompous paintings at the art shows they have seen the treasures in the Hermitage and in our other museums.

The improvement in public taste

Our social advance is catching up with literature. Factory workers, students, engineers and housewives have more interesting and profound things to say about books than many critics. They all call for more significant, more complex, more profound writing.

What matters is not one work or another or the statistics of talent or whether a new Tolstoy has been born. What is important is the general character of literature. In Chekhov's day people read not only Chekhov, but Potapenko, Boborykin, Barantsevich, Skitalets and many other ordinary writers. Of course, the more intelligent readers understood that Potapenko was not to be compared with Chekhov, or Skitalets with the young Gorky ; but on the whole the writing conformed to the spiritual interests of society. Even the most mediocre writers dealt with problems that interested the readers of *Russkoye Bogatstvo* or *Russkaya Mysl*. Today the Soviet reader often puts a book down with a feeling of dissatisfaction ; it has not helped him to gain a better understanding of himself and the world around him ; it has not expressed his feelings, it has not answered the questions that interest him.

What lies at the root of the heated debates over our theatres ? The greater demands of the theatregoers. Naive plays where the dénouement is obvious from the very beginning, with no profound character portrayal or lofty ideas or craftsmanship, can no longer satisfy the public. Our producers and our actors cannot rest on their laurels. There is no solstice for the artist, in any sphere or age ; his days grow shorter or longer. One cannot live on splendid successes in the past.

No less heated are the debates in progress among artists. Some newspapers have been contemptuous about these, claiming that the heat of the controversy was a matter of personal attacks on one artist or another, or of Soviet painters' nostalgia for imitating foreign art, or, again, of an insufficient understanding of our Marxist philosophy on the part of the young. This is wrong. The controversies among artists arise from the spiritual growth of the public who visit the art shows, from a sense of responsibility, from a feeling of dissatisfaction. And I say that a master's dissatisfaction with himself and his colleagues is the leaven without which no art has ever made progress.

Dogmatism and definitions

Three years ago Academician Sobolev said in a *Pravda* article : " The mortal enemy of all progress in science is dogmatism, the substitution of irrevocable dogmas for genuine scientific investigation. The enemy has not yet been extirpated from scientific circles." These words have not gone out of date, and they apply not only to the scientific circles Academician Sobolev mentioned, but to literary and artistic circles also. Dogmatism is in direct contradiction to a socialist world outlook.

Our western adversaries, in reviewing some bad Soviet novel, declare exultantly : " This is what socialist realism leads to ! " From those hostile to socialism, opinions of this sort are natural enough. But I find it hard to under-

stand why people who support the socialist world outlook should attack socialist realism. Teplic, the Polish critic, thinks the failures of Soviet literature are to be explained by its adherence to socialist realism. In my view, by reasoning in this manner he falls into scholasticism, and in trying to combat dogmatism becomes himself a dogmatist.

Teplic, like some western writers, claims that Soviet literature was livelier and richer before the first Congress of Soviet Writers, when the definition of socialist realism was born. As I have said, quite a few fine books have also appeared in our country since the Congress. And I may add that before the Congress, too, we had both greater and lesser writers, both bold writers and timeservers, both original writers and derivative. Along with Mayakovsky, there used to appear at those literary evenings mediocre poets who tried to offset lack of talent by lack of restraint. Yesenin was surrounded by a group of spongers. Hundreds of tedious, far-fetched stories used to appear in *Krasnaya Niva*.

I marvel at the light-minded way people pass judgment on important cultural matters at the dictates of some passing mood. Last summer I heard a Soviet literary critic express unjust opinions about our past writing; it had suddenly dawned on him that there had as yet been nothing, that we had to begin from the beginning. Several months passed. The foreign news columns took on a gloomy tone. Then a different critic popped up and said: "Everything in Soviet literature used to be fine, but now it has suddenly gone bad."

I am not exaggerating: I recently read a lengthy article in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* by the critic Zelinsky about *Poetry Day*, a splendid anthology, warmly welcomed by all lovers of poetry. Zelinsky says, and in italics too, that he found in it a "slackened awareness of the times". The poetry in it, he says, shows "a distinct tendency towards descriptive lyricism and lyricism 'generally'". Yet Soviet culture, both past and present, and Soviet literature in particular, is inseparable from an awareness of the times. There is no need to get agitated and rush from one extreme to the other.

Outlook and interpretation

To return to the question of Socialist realism, Teplic is wrong to regard it as an artistic trend. It is a world outlook; it can clarify a writer's or artist's thinking, but it should not hamper variety in artistic currents, genres and forms.

We must know how to distinguish between socialist realism and misuses of the concept. In former years, if a critic wanted to belittle the landscapes of Saryan or the still-lives of Konchalovsky, he claimed that such canvases ran counter to socialist realism; he set them off against pompous oleographic portraits boasting neither socialist perception nor realism. We have seen the same thing in articles on literature; some critics had only two approaches: if a book had been awarded a prize they called it a masterpiece of socialist realism, and if a book had not been favoured they treated it as criminal, accusing the author of having violated every principle of socialist realism.

What this shows is not that the world outlook is wrong but that the interpretation has been dogmatic or even bureaucratic.

A world outlook has never determined either the bounds of what was to be portrayed or the artistic methods to be used. Fra Angelico, Uccello and Masaccio were not only contemporaries but men with the same world outlook, which we define as a unique combination of the religious mood of the Middle Ages and the early critical views of humanism. Yet how different are Fra Angelico's touching Madonnas from the flesh-and-blood women of Masaccio or the wild horsemen of Uccello!

Does Alexei Tolstoy's *Peter I* resemble Tynyanov's *Kiukhlya*? Does

Cavalry Army resemble *The Rout* ? Or does the poetry of Tvardovsky resemble that of Martynov ? Yet today they all naturally rank as works of socialist realism.

Respect for the readers

Some western writers say that what is wrong with Soviet literature is its tendentiousness. This charge is the result of either stupidity or hypocrisy. Tendentiousness denotes passion, and passion has always lived in real art. *The Divine Comedy* or Stendhal's *The Red and the White* [Lucien Leuwen] are not merely tendentious, they breathe the fire of political struggle, yet they have stood the test of time. An artist who loves his characters and is devoted to the idea that inspires him is always tendentious. "Art for art's sake" is not really just "for art's sake" ; in its own way it is thoroughly tendentious. It is not tendentiousness that degrades some Soviet works of art, but a spiritual coldness, a lack of genuine inspiration, a disregard for human emotions and the laws of art.

The fable is a developed form of literary creation, and fables, of course, often end with a moral. Novels and plays, however, cannot be written in this way. When they are, it shows a disrespect for the reader, a fear that he may fail to get the idea.

Fables appeal more to children than to adults. Many of our books for adults have been written with a profound conviction that the readers are children. Some of the blame for this must be laid on the literary critics, who are out of step with literature and, worse still, with life.

Some critics have the most naive idea of the effect of fiction. They think that if you present a character who is an ideal member of society everyone will emulate him, and that if you portray a scoundrel all the scoundrels (except perhaps the incorrigible) will immediately turn over a new leaf. One can hardly be bothered to argue with such critics. One wants to say : "Get up from your desks, will you ? Go out and talk to living human beings. You are not writing for eleven-year-olds. Your readers are sensible grown-up people, citizens of an advanced country, who work, struggle, suffer and rejoice."

Critics of the said kind divide fictional characters into two categories : the positive and the negative. They are displeased if a positive character should prove to have any defects. Should a negative character be given any good points, they get cross ; the proper order of things has been violated.

They take no account of the difference between the fifties and the twenties. Thirty years ago a class struggle was being waged here ; people whose minds had been shaped in capitalist society and who were interested in weakening the socialist system were real-life enemies. In the war and reconstruction years our people displayed unity, endurance and spiritual strength ; but the idea that conflicts, contradictions and struggle had disappeared from our lives was, of course, absurd. Everything has become more complicated. A struggle between the future and the past, between good and bad motives, is going on in the minds and emotions of millions of people.

We daily observe innumerable contradictions all round us. A competent factory director is criminally indifferent to the workers. An engineer who is an innovator on the job is severely patriarchal at home. A man who displayed outstanding courage during the war is a coward and a toady in relation to his boss.

It is the writer's duty to describe not the design of a machine but the inner world of the man who operates the machine. A writer who honestly wishes to portray Soviet man today cannot limit himself to two colours, black and white. Life demands a far richer palette.

The critical strait-jacket

Literary critics sometimes seem to me like laboratory assistants testing the composition of a wine. What is its sugar content? Is it too acid? They are anxious for every book to contain the correct proportions. Should an author introduce a bureaucrat, he must also introduce an honest worker who—supported by the other workers—opposes the bureaucrat. Should a story contain a hack writer, there must be a selfless artist to bar his path. Should a woman in a novel be loose-living, she must have a girl-friend who is a model of virtue.

This sort of criticism cripples young writers, particularly as applied to unpublished manuscripts. A young author who has written a true-to-life story about a hack writer without portraying a selfless artist in the same story will have it turned down ten times by ten different publishing houses, until the day that he decides to listen to “good advice”—and becomes a hack himself.

It is an author's artistic individuality that determines his choice both of literary form and of subject matter. The equilibrium that some critics worry about may exist in a body of writing as a whole, but not in each separate book. But should a writer concentrate on the seamy side of life, critics will at once accuse him of giving a distorted picture. Such critics spend their lives always on the alert, like fussy nursemaids looking after toddlers. They fear that readers of a novel depicting a heartless director at an institute will conclude that all institute directors are heartless. I say to them what I have said to western intellectuals. You see what has been accomplished; think about the people who did it. They are not children, but grown-up, emotionally mature people.

When an author tries to balance out light and darkness in a book, he sins unwittingly against his conscience as a writer; he shatters the idea of his book and mutilates his own spirit. He is afraid of being accused on the one hand of “dolling up”, or on the other hand—more often—of “casting aspersions”.

Nekrassov, Chernyshevsky and Saltykov-Shchedrin all contributed to the same magazine, *Sovremennik* (*The Contemporary*) in the same years. Could Nekrassov have been expected to present the spiritual world of a revolutionary with the same completeness as did Chernyshevsky? Is Saltykov-Shchedrin to be reproached for not having portrayed splendid Russian women?

We laugh, and rightly so, at Hollywood films with their inevitable happy endings. But we have novels with contrived endings wherein all conflicts are satisfactorily settled. Yet there are conflicts still unresolved; presenting them in literature might bring their settlement nearer. But authors are afraid that stories without happy endings will not be printed.

The administrative approach

It is frequently said that we must combat the administrative approach to literature. Much has been done in this direction, but far from enough. The editors of certain magazines are unnecessarily suspicious of manuscripts, particularly from young authors. With other books, which they dare not print and hesitate to reject, publishing houses have an artful but scarcely sensible tactic. They issue the “doubtful” book in a small edition. This is not to see whether the public will like it, but to limit the readership. Such publishing houses evidently fail to understand either Soviet democracy or the universality of Soviet culture.

An administrative approach is sometimes manifested in the evaluation of works already published. Some nine years ago we had a discussion at the Writers' Union on Simonov's story *Smoke of Our Homeland*. All the writers present praised the story. A few days later *Kultura i Zhizn* [*Culture and Life*] carried an article attacking the story and Fedin and Ehrenburg for liking it.

In the spring of 1954 there was a discussion at the Writers' Union on

Panova's *Seasons of the Year*, which almost everyone praised. Some months later one of the central newspapers carried an article propounding quite a different view of Panova's book.

Not long ago, writers discussed the work of several young authors and poets. All spoke of the merits of the works under discussion. Then all of a sudden there appeared a series of articles speaking only of the negative features of such-and-such a novel or poem. There was no real public discussion, as there had been none on *Smoke of Our Homeland* or *Seasons of the Year*. In my view, books should be discussed and various opinions compared, rather than its being administratively decided whether or not they are any good.

The same sort of thing is to be seen in other spheres. A sudden campaign against impressionism broke out. I say "sudden", because impressionism has become a part of the history of world art. Paintings by the Impressionists are firmly established in every gallery in the world, including our own. Debates about impressionism were understandable ninety years ago, when Zola passionately defended the new trend in art against attacks from the supporters of academicism and romanticism. Nobody nowadays can talk seriously of imitating impressionism, while nobody can seriously deny that artists have something to learn from the Impressionists. The polemics against those artists who commented favourably on paintings by the nineteenth-century French masters sounded more like angry rebukes by schoolmasters than a creative discussion of an important historical phenomenon. *Sovetskaya Kultura* [*Soviet Culture*] went so far as to speak of an admirer of impressionism in a tone usually applied only to hooligans.

Party guidance

Some devotees of dogmatism may perhaps ask whether I deny Party guidance of literature. I do not; but I repudiate the mechanical and over-simplified understanding of big ideas. The concept "social commission", for example, is taken to mean merely the commissioning of a short story or a poem by a publishing house or an editorial board. But fulfilling a social commission does not mean writing something on subject A at the orders of editor B. It means sharing the life and interests of the people, answering the questions that agitate their minds, and lighting the way ahead.

The Party guides the entire activity of the people; but the nature of the guidance varies with the nature of the activity. With a factory production schedule, precise instructions, time-limits and figures are possible. With a scientist working on a problem of technological improvement, precise time-limits are impossible; there can be only broad outlines. A physicist, mathematician or biologist works on his own initiative, and later his work finds practical application in industry or agriculture.

Literature and art, by nature, cannot tolerate administration. The Soviet writer draws his inspiration from the life of the people; here is the first and main significance of Party guidance of literature. The writer is taking an active part in building communism, even if his social activity is conducted exclusively at his desk.

Since the twentieth Congress, things have become harder for the fellow who asks tricky questions, like the one at the beginning of this section, and easier for literature. What I object to is not the communist trend of our literature, but the bureaucratic approach.

Literature and life

A writer must keep pace with the life of the people, pose social problems, throw light on psychological processes not yet sufficiently clear. He must be ahead of his readers. It is not enough for a writer to expound what he reads

in the newspapers. He must take part in building society, in developing culture, in promoting spiritual growth. He can do so if he reveals the inner world of his characters with such truth and depth that his readers gain a better understanding of themselves and those around them and are better able to get rid of what is bad, mean and unwanted in their surroundings and themselves.

If a writer regards his work not as a calling but as a job, he not only lowers his prestige, he becomes useless. Not everyone can be a genius, but everyone must remember what a writer's duty is. To be a real writer, it is not enough to know how to put together a novel or a play (though that is necessary too, of course). You have to put your heart and soul into your writing ; you have to foretell rather than retell.

The most difficult stage lies behind us. The society that is to justify the hopes of progressive mankind has been established. For the first time in history, it is not only the few that have been concerned in building culture. Like millions of other educational workers, the village schoolmistress who wrote to me has done much to broaden and deepen culture. She has sown, and she has a right to expect to garner the harvest.

Connections

This article may seem incoherent. What connection is there, the reader may ask, between the anti-Soviet campaign in the West and the change-over to universal secondary education in the Soviet Union ; between the reasons for the confusion that has seized on certain left-wing intellectuals in the West and our own hangovers from dogmatism ? I believe that all the questions I have touched upon are intermingled. They are the topics of today.

My words are addressed to two different audiences, Soviet readers and intellectuals in the West. It may benefit the Soviet reader to examine somewhat more broadly questions which directly interest him, to look back once again over the path traversed, to grasp the significance of Soviet culture, whose growth arouses hope in some and fury in others.

It will, I believe, be of interest to western readers to read of both the achievements and the difficulties of Soviet literature. We are able to talk freely about our shortcomings because we are right on the main point, because with all the difficulties we have built up a deeply human and popular culture.

It is time western intellectuals rejected the simplified conception of Soviet society, which has long been depicted abroad as either a hell or a paradise. We live on earth. We have many difficulties. But we are happy to have been the first to tread the new path which will be taken by the whole of mankind.

Recent events, which brought about a fresh worsening of the international situation, have intensified the mental anxiety of many western intellectuals. They must realise that the road to socialism is not strewn with rose-petals. Struggling for and building the future is a difficult job at times, full of violent upheavals and mental anguish. There is nothing slavish about loyalty ; it is a great virtue. It calls for a measure of self-restraint in relations between individuals and also in relations between the individual and society. Such self-restraint is dictated by reason and conscience, and by an understanding of the need to take account of the sacrifices and hopes of the people.

The world of profit and spiritual stagnation cannot be defied either by the revolt of a solitary individual or by a declaration signed by a group of writers, no matter how noble that declaration may be. You can be for socialism or against it. There is no " third force " or third path or third destiny.

Exactly fifty years ago, when I was in my teens, I attended my first illegal meeting of Moscow workers. I cannot draw any straight line between that distant day and today. I often strayed in my youth. My path was a tortuous one. But now I see which way I was going ; I understand what I was striving

for, what I wanted. Perhaps it is because I remember how I myself turned aside long ago that I am not prepared to condemn those western writers who are now filled with alarm and uncertainty. I only ask that they should distinguish the main point from all that is keeping them from seeing it. I am convinced that if not tomorrow, then the day after, we shall surely meet those western writers who, like Vercors or Carlo Levi, consider "the quest for the truth" to be the most important thing for them.

When you are young you often tell yourself it might be better to put away what you have written, while you think about it, look around, wait a bit. At my age it is difficult to put things off. Besides, the times tell me that I cannot be silent. These are difficult times and individual responsibility is great. For us, we shall not retreat one step. The spirit of our people is the guarantee.

Slightly abridged from *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, February 9 and 12, 1957.

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Soviet Agriculture Today

I

YEAR OF CHANGE

A. Khankovsky

LET us talk about agriculture. We want our readers to know some figures, facts and conclusions regarding agricultural production in the Soviet Union—what the workers on the land have achieved this year.

In 1913 the population of the country within the present frontiers totalled 159.2 million. By April 1956 it had reached a figure of 200.2 million. The 41-million increase demands increased agricultural production. The population is increasing by three million annually, and the average expectation of life today is sixty-four years, as against thirty-two under Tsarism. Another aspect of the problem is that the increase in the town population has been proportionately even greater. In 1913, 82.4% of the whole population lived in the country and, of course, grew their own food. By the spring of 1956 the rural population comprised only 56.6% of the total. In the period under review the rural population decreased not only relatively but absolutely. It is eighteen million less than in 1913, while the urban population has grown by nearly fifty-nine million. Between 1950 and 1954 there was a seventeen-million population increase. In the same five-year period over nine million left the rural areas for the cities. The effect of these figures on the balance between production and consumption of agricultural produce is most important.

The acuteness of the problem of improving agriculture certainly cannot be explained simply by the quantitative increase in population. Workers and peasants are living and eating considerably better than they did before the revolution or before the second world war. The systematic cuts in the prices of consumer goods and foodstuffs and the rise in real wages condition a steady growth in purchasing power. Budget research by the Central Statistical Administration shows that in 1956 working-class families increased purchases of footwear and textiles 94% compared with 1940. Purchases of woollen goods almost trebled. Purchases of leather footwear by collective-farm families increased 95%, those of textiles more than doubled and those of woollen goods more than trebled. Textiles and footwear mean wool, cotton, flax and leather.

Compared with 1940, consumption of food products by industrial and clerical workers increased in 1956 as follows: milk and milk products doubled; eggs 86%; meats and fats 62%; sugar 87%. Collective farmers' *per capita* consumption of meat and fats increased 54%; milk and milk products 4.7%; eggs doubled; sugar more than trebled.

These facts help to explain the inadequacy of agricultural output.

Past Mistakes

What factors, even as late as 1954, impeded or prevented the development of the agricultural productive forces? How was it that socialist agriculture organised on a co-operative basis marked time for so long? How was it that direct and developing State aid in equipping agriculture with up-to-date

machinery was so long unable to increase agricultural output significantly? There can be no doubt that serious mistakes did occur.

[Khankovsky then refers to the resolution of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party on the personality cult (June 30, 1956), to Lenin's remarks on the importance of agriculture at the eleventh Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, and to the September 1953 plenary session of the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee, which drew particular attention to the infringement of one of the most important Leninist principles of socialist development in agriculture, that of the material interests of collective farmers in the growth of collective farm production.]

Fulfilment of grain delivery plans and deliveries of other produce usually proceeded in a way that did not encourage the development of agricultural production at all. For example, if weak or backward collective farms failed to fulfil the state plan of compulsory deliveries and grain purchase, the district leaders gave leading farms supplementary tasks. This was the only way the whole district could reach an honourable place and report successes. Similar methods were used by leaders at Regional, Territorial and Republic level. Arrears of produce in one District were made up by supplementary assessments to leading Districts and Regions. The sale of goods in the open market was forbidden unless and until the position of the individual farms, Districts and Regions had been "brought up to scratch".

As a result, all collective farms whether efficient or inefficient emerged with similar results. Members of both good and bad artels often received goods in kind at the same rate for each labour day worked. And both fed their cattle equally inefficiently, on concentrated fodder. This mistaken policy inevitably forced all collective farms and farmers down to the level of the worst.

What is more, the compulsory deliveries and purchases were often fixed "by eye", not based on any definite or sensible principles or on any actual estimates of the harvest. It is not difficult to understand that by and large this vicious system frequently destroyed the material interest of the collective farms in developing production. The high delivery levels fixed, and the mistakes in tax policy, led to a decrease in the livestock population and the felling of orchards and vineyards personally owned by the farmers. In Stalin's policy with regard to the peasantry, particularly in his last years, first place was accorded to administrative interference, and the principle of material self-interest was forgotten. This policy was in profound contradiction to the interests of the collective farmers as a whole, and resulted in lagging behind of agriculture.

There is no doubt that the State succeeded in equipping agriculture with a large amount of machinery and in bringing about a gigantic technical revolution in agriculture. There is much cause for pride in these achievements. But here, too, a good many mistakes crept in. In the first place, the assertion that Soviet agriculture was the most highly mechanised in the world was not true. There were, for example, over one and a half million tractors in use in the USA as far back as 1940, and this figure had risen to 3.6 million by 1950. One tractor had to cover only fifty-four hectares of ploughland. The USA had more combine-harvesters and lorries than we had. The use of electricity in agriculture was higher in the USA than here. Admittedly in our large-scale agriculture the machinery is put to better use than in the USA, with a larger range of work in any one season. That is true, but a basic drawback of our mechanisation policy, which makes itself felt, is that not a single branch of agricultural production has complex mechanisation yet. Without this it is impossible to make the most of the equipment potential. We used to lull ourselves with fairy tales about the maximum mechanisation of agriculture, and when it came to harvesting we lost an enormous amount of grain, maize, potatoes and other products annually because of the low level of mechanisation.

[He then quotes from the appropriate section of the decisions of the September 1953 plenary session of the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee.]

In point of fact, though the reaping of eared grain is 85% mechanised in the country as a whole and 100% mechanised in the grain districts of the south, the post-reaping processes (cleaning, drying, loading and unloading) are largely done by hand and include loading and unloading by bucket, crate or any other manual means available. As a result, the post-reaping processes quite often cost more than the mechanised work in preparing the soil (lucerne, ploughing, harrowing, cultivator-turning and fertilising) and sowing and reaping by combine-harvesters all together.

Data from the USSR Ministry of Agriculture show that in the main grain areas, where the highest level of mechanisation has been achieved, eighty-five labour days per man are required per 100 hectares of land to sow and reap the grain by combine-harvester, while 157 labour days per man are required for the post-reaping processes on unmechanised principles over a similar area of land. In other words, manual labour predominates in post-reaping work, and this is the root of the trouble.

We still have many threshing floors where the simplest of manually operated grain-cleaning machinery is in use. We have farms where grain is weighed manually on the threshing floors. The absence of complex mechanisation in labour processes often nullifies the enormous efforts made to supply agriculture with machinery, reduces the efficiency of mechanisation at all preceding stages, holds up agricultural development and paralyses the growth of labour productivity.

Mistakes have also been made in the administration of agriculture as regards policy on prices for agricultural produce and on taxation. As late as 1955 there existed a planning system in agriculture so centralised that the collective farms were unable to display the slightest economic initiative. Delivery prices were in most cases so low that production was not stimulated. Collective farmers received little money or produce for their labour days. This policy decisively cramped the development of agriculture.

State budgeting for agriculture has been extremely inadequate. As a result, mechanisation and electrification of labour-consuming processes, especially in livestock breeding, have been carried out very slowly, and the technical basis of agriculture has failed to keep pace with demand, thus hampering progress.

Electrification of agriculture was an essential and organic part of the Lenin plan for the electrification of the whole country, and Stalin clearly underestimated Lenin's idea. Electrification of agriculture proceeded very slowly. Until the twentieth Congress (February 1956), we had not tackled this problem in any really business-like way.

Programme for rapid improvement

In the three years from September 1953, the Communist Party and the Soviet Government did a great deal to improve agriculture and bring it into line with the new demands being made on it for communist construction. It would be no exaggeration to say that the Party had never since the days of Lenin paid so much attention to agriculture as in those three years.

Agriculture was given the task of sharply increasing the output of every kind of grain (industrial, fodder, meal, and bean crops) to ten thousand million poods annually in five or six years, and this figure was raised to eleven thousand million poods in February 1956. In two years alone, 1954 and 1955, capital investment in agriculture was 34.4 thousand million roubles, 38% more than during the fourth five-year plan (1946-50). In the same two-year period, industry supplied agriculture with 400,000 15-horsepower tractors, 228,000 trucks, 83,000 grain combines and a large amount of other agricultural machinery.

The machine and tractor stations have an increased number of specialists,

and special mechanisation experts are now permanently attached to them, a particularly important factor. Over 120,000 agricultural specialists joined collective farms in 1954-6, and more than 20,000 city workers were recommended for chairmanship of collective farms.

State delivery prices for agricultural products were sharply increased. Tax policy was tidied up, which resulted in a considerable increase in collective-farm incomes. Money income of the collective farms, which had stood at 49.6 thousand million roubles, had by 1955 risen to 75.6 thousand million roubles. This had a good effect on the material position of collective farmers and their material interest in the success of the collective-farm structure.

Excellent results have been obtained from the decision to introduce new methods of planning in agriculture.

The planning system developed over a quarter of a century had, up to 1955, suffered from grave drawbacks and bureaucratic distortions. The gravest fault of this system was over-centralisation. Collective and State farms were presented with prepared plans for sowing all types of crop and the number of head of livestock of all kinds was determined for them.

Stereotyped planning often resulted in incorrect calculation of the actual specific characteristics of individual farms, of their soil, their climatic and economic characteristics and their potential. In the south of the country, for example, the use of vernalised wheat was given priority in planning, although large-scale experience, economic considerations and common sense all showed that it was more advantageous to sow winter varieties. The opposite was the case in Siberia. Many years of experience in the Baltic areas had proved conclusively that in that area it was most advantageous to raise bacon pigs. This did not prevent agricultural and planning organs from insisting that collective and State farms must raise lard pigs. The development of sheep breeding was forced on a number of areas near towns, an uneconomic practice owing to lack of pasture, when it would have been far more economic in such areas to encourage the development of dairy farming and pig breeding.

Similar drawbacks existed in planning the work of machine and tractor stations, which were also presented, in a centralised manner, and from above, not only with general plans but with details of the kind of mechanisation work they were to do ; this restricted their initiative and that of the collective farms, producing a lack of economic co-ordination. Finally, the volume of collective and State farm produce marketed, adequate to meet the country's requirements, was not planned at all.

The March 1955 decisions established a new planning system corresponding to the new requirements for the development of the socialist economy. The most important principles in this system of planning for Soviet agriculture today are as follows. The starting-point for the plan in the collective farms is no longer the quantity of hectares sown or the number of head of cattle kept ; it is the amount of the saleable produce delivered by the collective farms to the State. Planning begins in the collective farms (together with the machine and tractor stations) and in the State farms. The plans are based on a correct and full utilisation of usable land. The index of the results of collective-farm production is today the scale of gross produce per 100 hectares obtained by the collective farm, on the basis of the labour-day most economical of labour and equipment per unit of produce.

The collective farms now decide for themselves the size of the area they will sow to individual crops, the number of head of cattle and the composition of the herds, and the scale of planned production. They also discuss and approve the plans outlined at general meetings of the collective farmers. These plans are then examined and approved by the district executive committees, which send forward composite collective-farm plans to the higher Soviet organs.

This new approach has increased the collective farmers' own responsibility

for the development of collective-farm production, and also makes it possible for them to exercise a direct influence on the final economic results of their working time. Today the State says to agricultural workers : “ Use the land and the machine and tractor station technology in the way you find best, sow such crops as are most advantageous to you, take into account the general interests and requirements of the State, and display your own initiative.”

The experience of 1955 and 1956 has shown that the new planning practice has in many collective farms already led to a rise in the economic use of the farm unit. Conscious of this, collective farms have started growing those crops which are worth while, and uneconomic crops have simply disappeared from their crop rotation. All this serves to increase their own material interest in the communal economy. Unfortunately the great possibilities afforded by this new method are not yet being used to any great extent. In some cases routine and poor initiative on the part of collective-farm leaders is the reason ; in others all kinds of bodies above the collective farms, used to ossified bureaucratic ways of doing things and afraid of anything new and alive, cling persistently to old bureaucratic notions. But the new spirit is breaking through all obstacles.

First successes

What results are to be seen from all these new measures ? Facts and figures show beyond doubt that agriculture has taken a substantial step forward since 1954, and that progress is being maintained. Between 1953 and 1955 the sown area increased by almost twenty-nine million hectares, including the twenty-five million hectares on the virgin lands. The number of head of cattle increased by 4.1 million between October 1, 1953, and October 1, 1955. There was a 4.6-million increase in the number of pigs and a 6.7-million increase in the number of sheep and goats.

The curve of increased agricultural output is moving slowly upward. In 1955 grain production increased 22% compared with 1954 : there was a 95% increase in sunflower seed output, a 54% increase in sugar beet output and a 74% increase in flax production. The milk yield per collective-farm cow increased 16% in the 1954-5 economic year, and there was a 31% increase in the production of milk on the collective farms in 1955.

The area sown to all types of agricultural crop was 194 million hectares in 1956. This means that in 1953-6 the sown area in USSR agriculture increased by almost thirty-seven million hectares. To appreciate these figures it is worth recalling that in the preceding forty years (1913-53) the sown area had increased by only thirty-nine million hectares. It is noteworthy that the extension of the sown area has largely been to grain crops. The area under wheat increased by fourteen million hectares in the same period and that sown to maize by twenty million. In other words, the wheatfields of the Soviet Union in this period increased by as much as the area sown to this crop in France, Germany, Australia and Spain together. The figure is even more eloquent as regards maize, to which only about five million hectares are sown in the capitalist countries of Europe.

Another important feature in 1956 was an improvement in soil cultivation. The amount of chemical and organic fertiliser used in the first half of 1956 was considerably greater than for the similar period in the preceding year. Conditions for the spring sowing were very difficult in some areas. Some of the autumn sowing was frostbitten and had to be re-sown ; spring came very late in the southern districts, reducing the amount of time at the disposal of grain-workers. Nevertheless, spring agricultural work was carried out in a more organised way and in a shorter period than in the preceding year. The weather was very bad almost everywhere during the harvest period, and there

was pouring rain, but the harvest work was carried through better than in previous years.

The harvest yield for grain crops in 1956 was a record, and the gross figures for other crops also showed a considerable increase. This made it possible for the State to receive by November 5, 1956, deliveries of 3,281,000,000 poods of grain, or 3,463,000,000 poods with other agricultural produce. The State now has a large reserve of grain for trading purposes. We have enough food grain : we are able to extend exchange with socialist countries considerably.

State grain deliveries for 1953-6 accurately reflect the tendency to agricultural increase already noted. In 1954 State and collective farms delivered and sold to the Soviet State 271 million poods of grain more than in 1953. In 1955 there was a further increase of 147 million poods over the previous year's figure. In 1956 State grain deliveries amounted to 1,000 million poods more than in the best harvest years. These facts are of enormous economic, political and international importance.

There have also been noticeable advances in livestock breeding. The gross milk yield in collective and State farms increased by over four million tons in the 1955-6 economic year. By November 1, 1956, 15.9 million tons of milk had been delivered and sold to the State, 3.6 million tons more than by the same date in 1955. There was a 23% increase in the production of animal fats for the ten months of 1956 by comparison with the same period in 1955. The production and delivery of meat and eggs also increased.

These facts and figures should not be regarded merely as statistics. They are tried out in practice by every housewife, felt by every child. Milk and milk products—butter, cheeses, *keffir*, yogurt—are winning a stable place in the diets of city-dwellers.

The specific increase in the number of State farms in socialist agriculture and their leading place in growing and delivering grain to the State is an important feature of the 1956 agricultural results.

In 1954-5 581 large State farms were set up, including 425 in the virgin lands. In 1956 the area of the State farms of the USSR Ministry of State Farms sown to grain alone amounted to twenty-three million hectares. The sixth five-year plan directives envisage the delivery of 915 million poods of grain per year from the State farms by 1960.

There were 340 specialised farms in February 1956 within the Ministry of State Farms, and 135 of these specialised in vegetable and potato production. In the first two years of the sixth five-year plan a further 100 large State farms, producing mainly vegetables and potatoes and vegetables and dairy produce, are to be organised.

The best State farms have been able to utilise the most advanced machinery, agronomy and applied zoo-technics. Complex mechanisation of agricultural production, used with modern agronomy, has helped them to achieve the highest possible level of labour productivity, high yields per field, maximum utilisation of animal produce per land area unit, and the highest possible milk yields and wool-clippings. Many State farms have not yet succeeded, however, in making use of all the advantages that this higher form of socialist agriculture can give. An average of 3.6 man-hours per centner of grain is necessary in the State farms as a whole, although the best can achieve the same result with 1.0 or 1.5 man-hours ; the average number of man-hours to produce a centner of milk is sixteen, but the best farms can achieve the same results with only eight or ten man-hours.

In 1956 the State farms more than doubled their total sown areas as compared with 1953. The area sown to grain crops in the same period rose from 7.3 million hectares to twenty-three million hectares and 13.7 million hectares of virgin land were tilled. Many State grain farms now produce several million

poods of grain per year each, harvesting an average of over twenty centners per hectare.

In 1956, the farms of the USSR Ministry of State Farms delivered over 900 million poods of grain, 4.6 times as much as in 1953. This constitutes approximately half the national annual spending balance. This means that in time State-farm grain will be able to meet the main requirements of the 200 million population.

New lands

The year 1956 saw a very substantial change in the geographical distribution of agricultural production. In the period 1953-6, 35.5 million hectares of virgin land were brought into tillage. It is not so long since the main food areas were the grainlands of the Volga, Don, Kuban and Dnieper basins. The situation is being radically altered today.

In 1956 the collective and State farms of the Russian Federation delivered to the State over 2,000 million poods of grain, as much as the whole of the USSR delivered in 1953. Kazakhstan used to deliver from fifty to seventy million poods. This figure exceeded 1,000 million poods in 1956. Over eighteen million hectares of land were sown to vernalised wheat in Kazakhstan in 1956.

Many more million poods

The central task in grain production is an increase in harvest yields and a reduction in harvesting losses.

Harvesting has hitherto been one of the most vulnerable spots in agriculture. There were complaints that the soil yielded its gifts reluctantly. Energetic measures were undertaken to hearten the soil by better tillage, better crop rotation, use of fertilisers and other such agro-technical devices. It was a long time before people were ready to admit that the system for harvesting eared crops was so bad that milliards of poods of grain were being lost annually as a result.

The complete mechanisation of grain harvesting, using combine-harvesters, was a kind of ideal. Considerable successes were in fact achieved. In 1955, 85% of all grain crops (excluding maize) was reaped by combine. Leading workers in agriculture and many agricultural scientists insisted that the use of the combine was the most progressive method and obviated heavy losses. They even calculated that reaping 100 million hectares of eared crops by combine meant an increase of 1,00 million poods in the barn harvest as compared with harvesting a similar area by reapers. The introduction of combines into agriculture was therefore seen as a priority job. For a quarter of a century the policy of the agricultural authorities was directed towards increasing the available power of combine-harvesters and a continual extension of harvesting eared grain crops by combine. Efforts were made to fix this method of harvesting as the only one.

But at every step real-life experience proved the fallaciousness of this policy. Large-scale experience over a quarter of a century proved that the existence of the combine system of complex mechanisation in grain harvesting was causing rather than obviating the loss of 1,000 million poods of grain.

A harvesting system is efficient only when it ensures the harvesting of grain at the milky stage. It really can in that case be a considerable source of increase in the gross harvest. Various scientific observations and experiments have proved that in the process of maturing, when the grain is in the milky phase, its *natura* begins to shrink, i.e. the relation of weight to size becomes less. From this follow "biological" losses, which increase the longer the grain remains standing. As the grain develops from the milky phase to full ripeness (hardness), mechanical losses are suffered in addition; the best grain falls, and

whole ears crack. If the grain mass is cut during the milky phase and left to lie in swathes, ripening is completed in a few days and the grain is easy to thresh with a combine and winnower. In this way both biological and mechanical losses in the ear are almost entirely eliminated.

How great are these losses? On the Budenny collective farm in the Besskorbnensk machine and tractor station zone in Krasnodar Territory, some twenty-one centners per hectare of milky-phase grain were harvested in these two stages. When completely ripe grain was harvested by combine, only 14.2 centners per hectare had been obtained. Thus 6.7 centners per hectare had been lost, nearly a third of the harvest.

Why is grain not harvested by combine during the milky phase? Because raw unripe grain cannot be cut and threshed at the same time. A combine effectively harvests only dry and completely ripe grain. Therefore it is necessary to seek such methods of complex mechanisation of harvesting as will prevent mass losses, the methods technologically best suited to the particular biological features of any given crop—for instance, the two-stage, separate harvesting of eared grain in the milky phase. The single-stage (combine) method must play a subsidiary, not a major, role.

The losses mentioned are, however, only those inevitable with combine-harvesting, which occur in the first few days of harvesting. The matter would be confined to these if harvesting took only one or two days. Combine harvesting on most farms, however, has unfortunately taken twenty, thirty, forty or more days. In such cases the losses increase day by day, and sometimes from half to three-quarters of the entire harvest is lost.

The enormous losses of ripe grain from leaving it too long standing uncut, when the combine-harvesting method was used, were further increased owing to the dry winds [*sukhovei*] which are only too well known to grain-growers in the south. Winds blowing during the actual harvesting often damage the grain crop not only in the south but also in the east. In Stavropol Territory, for example, they are known as “Astrakhan winds”, while the Kuban calls them “Stavropol winds”. Winds of this kind blowing across unharvested ripe grain “thresh” a considerable proportion of the harvest.

Comparative data of tremendous practical value have been obtained by harvesting grain in the same area by the two methods. At the end of July 1956 the secretary of the Stavropol Territory Communist Party Committee, I. Lebedev, brought three sheaves to a plenary committee meeting. The first sheaf had been taken from a field cut and left to lie during the milky phase of ripening. Twenty-one centners per hectare had been harvested from this area, the stacking and threshing of the swathes having been done promptly. The second sheaf came from the same area, but had not been lifted promptly and had lain in rain and hail. Only sixteen centners per hectare had been threshed. The third sheaf had been taken from an unharvested ripe-grain area in the same field, but had been standing uncut when the hail came. Not a single centner had been threshed from the last; every grain had fallen from the ears.

Over 100,000 hectares of eared grains in Stavropol Territory State and collective farms were damaged by hail during 1956. On farms where the grain had been harvested in the milky phase, however, very little damage occurred. From fourteen to seventeen centners per hectare had been harvested on three collective farms where hail had fallen. In those farms where the hail had caught still-standing grain, only 50-150 kg. per hectare were harvested.

Thousands of millions of poods of grain will be gained if new methods of harvesting are introduced, and losses during harvest, shipment and post-harvest processing will be eliminated.

The new harvesting method was introduced in all grain areas in 1956. Twenty-two and a half million hectares of grain were harvested in 1956 by the two-stage method. The grain yield per hectare harvested rose from two to six

centners. This is estimated to have resulted in an increase of 500 million poods.

A solution of the grain problem and a considerable improvement in all agricultural work are essential to a rapid increase in all kinds of meat and dairy products. Much still remains to be done to bring agriculture up to the level required. It is good to know that the process has begun and its effects are already daily apparent. Agriculture, which has long failed to keep pace with social development, is catching up and moving to the fore.

Slightly abridged from *Novy Mir* 12, 1956.

II

RESULTS AT KALINOVKA

V. Polyakov

Kalinovka, Kursk Region

I RECENTLY met a group of workers in agriculture from Kazakhstan. They were talking about the virgin lands, their plans and the urgent problems facing collective and State farms. Then they asked: "How are they getting on at Kalinovka?" It is no accident that in far-off Kazakhstan they are interested in the Kursk village of Kalinovka. It typifies the great advance of Soviet agriculture since September 1953.

It was a winter's day. Leaders of the collective farm and its active workers were gathered at the office. Chairman Vasili Vasilyevich spoke of the great changes that have taken place in Kalinovka. "It will be best", he advises, "to start with a comparison between the results for 1956 and those for 1953, when we started."

<i>Crop</i>	<i>Harvest</i>	
	In centners per hectare	
	1953	1956
All grain crops	7.4	30.1
Maize (dry grain)	None sown	56.0
Winter rye	8.7	18.3
Winter wheat	7.5	16.8
Oats	4.6	20.0
Millet	17.2	26.4
Vetches for seed	2.2	23.7
Potatoes	74.0	185.0
Hemp seed	3.0	8.6
Hemp fibre	3.0	10.0
<i>Other figures</i>	1953	1956
Gross grain harvest (centners)	5,583	22,536
% of above rep. by maize	0	61.0
% of total grain crop area sown to maize	0	32.7
Gross hay harvest (centners)	4,646	7,296
Vetch-and-oats cut for hay (included in above)	280	5,308
Total of maize and vetch-and-oats for green fodder (centners)	0	20,320
Silage put down (tons)	120	4,500
Milk produced per milch cow (kilo- grams)	1,164	3,726
Pigs fattened	25	655
Monetary income of farm (thousands of roubles)	687	5,600

The farm has met its State obligations ahead of schedule and has sold the State 360 centners of meat and 860 centners of milk in addition to the quota.

There are no miracles. What then were the forces that enabled the Kalinovka collective farm economy to make such a rapid spurt forward ?

The main force was new agricultural planning method, the increased importance assigned to machine and tractor stations in the development of farm production. Basing their calculations on the new planning system, the Kalinovka farmers worked out the relative advantages of various crops. The figures they arrived at were amazing. Under their local conditions the most advantageous of all fodder crops was maize. One hectare of maize yields over 7,300 fodder units, while one hectare of barley gives only 1,260, and one hectare of fodder beet 3,780 ; and so on. Yet maize had previously been sown only in the farmers' own kitchen-gardens. In the collective-farm fields sunflowers, barley, oats and perennial grasses had been sown for fodder year after year. There were plenty of fodder crops, but no fodder.

Having weighed up the pros and cons the farmers boldly decided to reduce, or for the time being eliminate, the low-yield fodder crops and to increase maize sowings sharply, to make maize the main fodder basis in fact. The area sown to maize was fixed at as much as 290 hectares, almost one-third of the total area sown to all grain crops. In 1953 only 120 tons of silage were put down ; in 1956, 4,500 tons. This is entirely maize silage. The farm is now feeding fourteen tons of silage a day to its livestock ; they can give the cows their fill, they can feed silage to the sheep, the calves and the pigs.

The maize is the origin of the flourishing state of the livestock-farming in Kalinovka ; that is where the meat and the milk come from. It is therefore all the more saddening that there should still be farm notables who do not understand the importance of maize. In the same district there are farms which cannot succeed in growing good crops of maize. I asked local people why it was that on some farms the maize yields were so low. I was referred to the cold weather, the early onset of winter. It is true there was a bad spring and a worse summer. But at Kalinovka, in the same conditions, fifty-six centners of grain and 250 centners of straw were harvested from every hectare, while their neighbours got in only a tenth of that amount. It was not the cold that was the root of the trouble.

Closer investigation reveals that the main cause was lack of attention to the growing maize. In Khomutovka I happened to hear someone say : " The maize was spoiled by free grazing." What did that mean ? I found that cattle are sometimes turned out to graze in the maize fields to eat the plants " on the root ". It would be more correct to say that they destroy it on the root, trample it to death, and at the stage when the plants are just beginning to set their growth. On the Saburov farm 150 hectares of maize were lost by " grazing ", and on the Voroshilov farm 300 hectares.

Is this practice justified ? An agronomist replies : " No one turns cattle into fields of good maize ; two-thirds of it will be trampled down. If a careful farmer needs extra green fodder, he cuts some maize and feeds it to the cattle. As far as I know, the only maize plantations where ' free grazing ' is practised are the neglected ones where the maize has been overgrown and for all practical purposes ruined."

Kalinovka has tackled the problem of juicy fodder and concentrated feed by growing maize ; the hay situation has been eased by using land that is " resting " after grain, instead of leaving it as bare fallow. In Kalinovka, as in other places nearby, the long-standing custom used to be to leave large stretches of land fallow. The brighter spirits on the farm then put it this way : " In regions liable to drought the purpose of leaving the land fallow is to let it accumulate moisture ; but we have enough moisture here. Could we not use the land that is usually left fallow ? " Plenty of objections were put forward. Fear was

expressed that if the farm gave up its fallow it would find itself without any grain harvest. There was a great struggle on the matter, but eventually experience convinced the farmers that in a well-watered region it was quite possible to get in a good harvest even from land that had been used for another crop the previous year. Now that the idea has been tried out for two years running, everyone sees what a reserve of resources the utilisation of fallow land means.

In 1956 sixty hectares of land that would otherwise have been left fallow were planted to maize, and 110 hectares to vetch-and-oats mixture. The livestock farm received 900 tons of greenstuff for the milk herd, 390 tons of young corn-cobs, 810 tons of silage and 385 tons of vetch-and-oats hay. The Kalinovka farmers estimate that this amount of hay and silage, fed to the cows, is enough to produce 660 thousand kilos of milk ; if this amount of milk were sold at wholesale prices the revenue to the farm would be about 800 thousand roubles. So much for making use of fallow land.

It may be asked whether the harvest yield from land thus used does not fall appreciably the next year. The experience of the past two years gives an unequivocal answer. In 1956 the harvest of winter rye sown on land already cropped was : after vetch, 19.2 centners ; after maize, 22.0 centners on average, and 23.0 centners on land disc-harrowed after the maize, but 20.0 on land re-ploughed. Formerly such yields were not obtained in Kalinovka even after sowing fallow land.

What else is there new in Kalinovka ? The farmers have started a big movement to reduce the labour expenditure per unit of production. New standards have been worked out and applied in the teams and on the livestock farms. The rates of labour expenditure and of payment in workdays have been reviewed in the light of what the best workers have achieved. A drive for economy and good husbandry has been started.

Payment of the farm chairman, the agronomist, the veterinary specialist, those in charge of the livestock farms and teams, and other prominent workers, has been fixed in a new way. A method has been introduced of crediting them with workdays on the basis of the gross output of crops and livestock. For instance, the farm chairman is credited with 0.2 of a workday per ton of grain produced, 0.1 of a workday per ton of potatoes, 0.65 of a workday per 1,000 kilos of milk, and so on. Similar rates are fixed for all the other leading workers. Of course this system is not yet perfect, but its stimulating effect is beyond doubt.

When the new system was introduced, some comrades were afraid it might have an adverse effect on the material position of the team-leaders, the agronomist, and so on. Here are some figures.

Comparative level of pay under old and new systems

	Workdays credited on basis of production at 1956 rates	Workdays estimated according to 1948 Decree
Farm chairman	1,495	1,630
Veterinary specialist	1,030	1,304
Agronomist	1,442	1,467
Leader of No. 1 team	1,009	600

Thus under the new system the number of workdays credited to the chairman, the agronomist and the veterinary specialist has gone down slightly, while that for the team-leader has gone up. Kalinovka approves of this. Your workdays may be slightly fewer, but they are yours on the basis of what has really been produced, for every centner of grain, milk and meat.

Work on reducing the labour expenditure per unit of production is still in

the early stages, but it is already bearing fruit. Here are the numbers of work-days spent on producing one centner of different products.

	1955	1956
Grain	1.45	0.84
Maize (in terms of dry grain)	1.50	0.36
Milk	12.00	7.80

In 1955-6 we did no manual cultivation of potato plants at all. As a result of mechanisation the average amount of labour expended on this crop was 0.35 of a man-day per hectare.

By November the Kalinovka farmers were already thinking about the next year. The agronomist Vanin made preliminary suggestions on what should go into the plan. Among his figures were the following: grain harvest yield per hectare to be raised to at least thirty centners; a target of four thousand kilos of milk from each milch cow; 780 pigs to be fattened.

There were heated arguments. By what means was the production of fodder to be increased? Primarily by a drive for more maize, the crop that is the basis of the fodder supply. At the same time, other resources are being made use of. The farm is to increase the amount of fodder crops sown on land that would otherwise lie fallow. In 1956-7 fodder supplies are to be appreciably helped by sowings of sugar-beet. It is estimated that if the farm sows twenty hectares to sugar-beet and harvests 200 centners of roots per hectare, the total yield of sugar-beet will be 400 tons. This will mean that throughout the period when the cattle have to stay in the byres they can be given 8-10 kilos of sugar-beet a day per head. This fodder policy means more milk and more meat.

Protein fodder is a current problem. It has been decided to increase the area sown to vetch for seed and to sow lucerne, mainly for the pigs. The output of vetch-and-oats mixture is to be increased, as is that of a mixture of maize and peas for green fodder.

In 1955 the Khomutovka District Committee of the Communist Party decided to try to extend the benefits of the Kalinovka experience to other farms. A special seminar was organised to study this experience, and an economic conference was held. Active Party workers in Khomutovka did a great deal of organisational work on the other farms. The results are now appearing. Where in 1953 the average yield of milk per cow in the District as a whole was 624 kilos, in 1956 it reached 2,122 kilos. In 1953 in the whole District only just over 700 pigs were fattened, but in 1956 the number rose to almost 10,000.

At the beginning of October N. S. Khrushchov visited the Khomutovka District. He went to farms, talked to prominent and rank-and-file farm workers, and inquired what practical guidance the District Committee was giving to the farms.

At Kalinovka Comrade Khrushchov gave the farmers a few words of advice. "You have some big successes to your credit", he said, "but now you have to go a step farther. Work out your own long-term plan, and think it over carefully before deciding anything. The output of meat and milk needs increasing still further. At the same time you should take up vegetable growing, start a collective market garden so that farm members can get vegetables against their workdays. You can sell vegetables to the State, too, especially pickled cabbage, tomatoes and gherkins. You and the other farms ought to have premises for the preliminary processing of hemp fibre. Part of the hemp should be processed on the spot, and the prepared fibre sold to the State. At present you cart unprocessed fibre to the factory, which has three years' supply lying there already. The State pays large sums to the farms for hemp fibre, and then

it lies about for years as dead capital. It's high time something was done about it."

Khrushchov advised the farmers to take a firm line against crediting workers with an inflated number of workdays and to review the standard rates in the light of decisions taken by general meetings.

He noted that the Khomutovka Party District Committee, as in former years, was still not covering each individual farm in its practical work. "You have Kalinovka and other advanced farms", he told administrators. "But side by side with them there are backward farms. The conditions are the same for all, the land is the same, but the results are different. Why? Because the District Committee does not approach each farm as an individual entity. 'General guidance' is out-of-date. Consider each farm individually. Go there, find out why it is backward, what it needs. Work out what practical aid is required, with the actual members of the farm, help them by sending in experienced people. Have another look at the way the land is being used. What is wanted is a plan for improving the economic position which says just what is to be done, who is to do it, and when. Then you have to get the people moving to implement the plan and to see to it that what has been planned is being done. And by seeing to it I do not mean holding meetings and talking about it, but going there and helping on the spot."

The year's results are cheering for the country as a whole, for everyone who works on the land. But not every collective farm has done all it intended. Far from it. There are latent resources that the leaders and the specialists have not yet touched. It is vital that there should be on every farm a critical assessment of work done, that people should look and see what remains to be done and think out practical steps towards a further increase in agricultural output.

Slightly abridged from *PRAVDA*, January 3, 1957.

NOTE

Sovietskaya Kultura, page 1, July 31, 1956, carries a review of a new documentary film entitled *Two-stage harvesting of grain crops*. The film is intended to demonstrate to working farmers the advantages in economic and agricultural terms of the fullest possible utilisation of this new method.

See also *Soviet Grain Production*, by N. S. Khrushchov, in *ANGLO-SOVIET JOURNAL* Vol. XVI, No. 1 (Spring 1955).

Recent SCR Publications

Children Love Munchausen. Kornei Chukovsky.

(Education Bulletin, Vol. IV, No. 1. 1/6, post free 1/9.)

Discussion on Biology. Election of Academy President. Semi-conducting Thermoelectric Installations.

(Science Bulletin, Vol. IV, No. 1. 1/6, post free 1/9.)

Conditioned-reflex Sleep. Obstetrics and Gynæcology. Health Resorts. Public Health.

(Medical Bulletin, Vol. IV, No. 1. 1/6, post free 1/9.)

STATISTICS OF SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE USSR

V. S. Nemchinov

The third International Congress of Sociologists, held at Amsterdam last summer, was attended by a Soviet delegation for the first time. Among the twelve papers read by Soviet sociologists were **Changes in National Relations in the USSR** (M. D. Kammari); **The Development of Education in the USSR** (I. A. Kairov); **Changes in Family Relations in the Soviet Republics of Central Asia** (Prof. H. S. Sulaimanova); **The Collective Farm System** (M. I. Moiseyev). We are privileged to publish below the concluding section of a paper read by Academician V. S. Nemchinov on changes in the class composition of the Soviet population.

IN order to illustrate the changes in Soviet society, let us consider the present class structure of the population of the USSR as compared with pre-revolutionary Russia. For comparison we will take the following periods in the history of Russia and the USSR.

- (a) The end of the nineteenth century (1897, the year of the first census).
- (b) The eve of World War I (1913)
- (c) The beginning of the industrialisation of the national economy just preceding the collectivisation of agriculture (1928).
- (d) The present period (1955).

Changes in Class Structure of the Population of the USSR

Class and social group (family included)	Russia		USSR	
	1897	1913	1928	1955
1. <i>Working class</i>	14.3	15.2	14.9	44.2
Of whom farm workers	2.5	3.5	2.0	7.4
2. <i>Peasants</i>				
(a) As a class or estate	68.5	—	—	—
(b) Individual farmers	—	66.7	74.3	0.5
(c) Collective farmers	—	—	2.9	41.2
3. <i>Capitalists</i>	15.2	15.2	4.6	—
Of whom village capitalists [Kulaki] ...	11.0	11.4	4.2	—
4. <i>Intelligentsia</i>	2.0	2.5	3.3	14.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Population (millions)	125.6	139.3	152.3	200.2

Note.—In compiling the tables statistical data in *The USSR Economy: A Statistical Abstract* (London, 1957) have been used, as well as other statistical publications.

The existence of, and changes in, the classes are closely connected with historically determined phases in the development of social production.

A complicated mesh of feudal and capitalist interrelations is characteristic of Russia at the end of the nineteenth century. In pre-revolutionary Russia the landlords, the imperial family and the monasteries possessed 152 million hectares and peasant homesteads 215 million hectares—including eighty million possessed by the kulaks. The percentage of large landlords in the population was insignificant—0.2%: therefore in the table they are included in the capitalist group. The great economic power of the landlords did not correspond at all to their percentage in the class structure of the country.

Owing to numerous surviving traces of feudalism the peasantry of nineteenth-century Russia was not so much a class of capitalist society as still an

estate of feudal society. The position of the main classes in feudal society was determined by the hereditary privileges of the landlords and feudalists and by the feudal bondage of the serfs. The peasantry at the end of the nineteenth century was only gradually ceasing to be a hereditary order of society or estate [*soslovie*]. Therefore it is quite deliberately that Lenin calls the Russian peasantry at the end of the nineteenth century a hereditary estate*. Its characteristic feature was communal ownership of land. Redistribution of the communal land was widely practised, and the peasants were allotted land plots belonging to the community [*nadyel*]. Compensation to the landlords for land handed over to the peasants when the latter were freed from bondage in 1861 continued to be paid by the peasants up to the beginning of the twentieth century. Only a small part of the peasantry possessed land as private property. In 1905, 490,000 private peasant landowners possessed 13.2 million *dessiatinas*.† After the 1905 revolution individual farm lands began to be separated out from communal land property [*khutori, otrubi*]. However, the process reached a certain degree of completeness only in the Baltic and some western provinces.

At the end of the nineteenth century (1897) the peasantry as an estate amounted to 68.5% of the total population of Russia, the bourgeoisie together with the landlords to 15.2%, the working class to 14.3%, and the intellectuals to only 2%.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, especially after the 1905 revolution, the old hereditary division of society was finally abolished. In Russia, as in other capitalist countries, a capitalist society had been formed, characterized by the existence of non-hereditary social classes.

A certain growth of the bourgeoisie was taking place in Russia. However, the working class was growing much more rapidly than the bourgeoisie, concentrating in comparatively large industrial enterprises. This concentration promoted political unity and growth of class consciousness in the proletariat.

In 1913 (on the eve of World War I and the October Revolution) the class composition of Russia's population was as follows: individual peasants, 66.7%; bourgeoisie, 15.6%; working class, 15.2%; intellectuals, 2.5%.

As a result of the victory of the great October Socialist Revolution, basic changes took place in the social structure of the population. As a result of the nationalisation of land, industrial enterprises, railways, banks and trade, the landlords, big capitalists, merchants and bankers ceased to exist as a class. Only the class of village capitalists (Kulaks) temporarily remained, and were subjected to a number of economic restrictions. These concerned the right to employ labourers and rent land, as well as prices of produce and incomes not derived from productive labour. This class ceased to exist only in 1929-30, after the collectivisation of agriculture.

In 1928 individual farmers (middle peasants) constituted the greatest single category in the social structure of the population of the USSR. The growth in the percentage of middle peasant farms led to a fall of the marketed surplus of agricultural commodities, and hampered the progress of socialist reproduction.

In 1928 the class composition of the population of the Soviet Union was as follows: individual peasants, 74.3%; collective farm peasants, 2.9%; working class, 14.9%; intellectuals, 3.3%; capitalists, 4.6% (mostly Kulaks).

Essential changes in the social structure of the population in the Soviet Union took place as a result of the further building of a socialist society, the industrialisation of the national economy which began in 1927, and the large-scale collectivisation of agriculture (1929-32).

The modern class structure of Soviet society was reflected in the Soviet Con-

* V. I. Lenin. *Works*. 4th Russian edition, vol. 6, p. 97.

† 1 *dessiatina*: 2.7 acres.

stitution of 1936. At present Soviet society consists of two basic classes, the working class (44.2%) and the collective farmers (41.2%), with individual peasants (0.5%) and a stratum of intelligentsia (14.1%).

The working class of today in the USSR, which shares ownership of the means of production with the whole nation, is a new social class which has abolished capitalist economy and consolidated socialist ownership of the tools and means of production. It is directing Soviet society along the path of communism.

The cultural level of the Soviet worker has greatly risen. At present 40% of the workers in heavy industry have received a seven-year or higher secondary education ; in the textile industry such workers constitute one-third of the total. Today Soviet workers are in the main drafted from those who have completed a regular course of study in factory and trade schools and in special schools and extension courses at their enterprises. Three hundred and fifty thousand young skilled workers are trained annually in industry, transport and building in the schools of the labour reserve system*.

Moreover, in industrial, transport and construction enterprises, special courses have been organised for the training of semi-skilled workers and for improvement in the skill of workers. Thus, in 1955, 3,346,000 new workers were trained and 3,561,000 workers graduated from advanced courses.

In the USSR the revenue from socialist enterprises, after expenses of production and payments to the social fund and the accumulation fund have been deducted, is distributed according to the quantity and the quality of the labour involved. The workers and the intellectuals receive their share in the shape of wages and salaries, with various subsidies from the State Budget and the funds of the enterprise. These subsidies include State expenses for education and industrial training courses free of charge, free medical services, scholarships to students, holiday wages, grants and social insurance, pensions, grants to mothers with many children, and so on. These payments raise the real wage by approximately one-third. In 1955, 154 milliard roubles were paid from the State Budget and the funds of the enterprises. According to the new pension law passed in July 1956, expenditure out of the State Budget on old age pensions, grants to the disabled and grants to families on death of wage-earner attain a yearly sum of approximately forty milliard roubles, which is 50% more than under the old law.

The working class is today numerically the largest in Soviet society. The second place is occupied by the collective farmers.

The collective farmers are a completely new social class, formed on the base of co-operative and collective farm ownership of the means of production. Co-operative and collective farm property includes draught and farm animals, farm buildings, agricultural machinery, means of transport, and so on. The collective farms have received 390 million hectares in permanent free tenure, and seven million hectares for individual allotments. The produce of the farm remains the property of the collective farmers. The revenue from the farm, after deduction of production expenses and grants to social funds, is distributed annually among the farmers according to their work, calculated in workday units. The workday unit is a measure of labour and consumption peculiar to the collective farm. Besides money and produce grants per workday unit, collective farmers, like industrial and office workers, receive money grants and privileges in the form of free education, medical services, scholarships, and so on. On many collective farms old age pensions are now granted to those farmers who have reached old age and have worked a required number of years.

* See *The State Labour Reserves*, by G. Moskatov, in *SOVIET EDUCATION BULLETIN*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (April 1956). Also *Soviet Technical Education*, by J. G. Crowther, in *ANGLO-SOVIET JOURNAL*, Vol. XVII, No. 2, and *Labour Reserve Training*, by A. Bordadyn, *ibid* Vol. XVII, No. 3.

These pensions are paid from the social funds accumulated out of monetary and produce revenue.

Co-operative and collective farm ownership of the means of production brings into existence peculiar economic and legal institutions which determine the position and economic status of collective farmers.

The State helps the collective farmers through machine and tractor stations, which cultivate the collective farm fields under contract with the farms. There are 9,000 machine and tractor stations which service collective farms in this way. Collective farms do not engage in capital expenditure to equip themselves with new and improved agricultural machinery. The machine and tractor stations are provided with new tractors, combines and other machinery at the expense of the State Budget.

Besides workers and collective farmers there is in the USSR a large social stratum, the intelligentsia, derived from the working people. The importance of the intelligentsia is rapidly increasing, in step with the industrialisation of the national economy and the growth in the cultural needs of the workers and collective farmers. Thus the number of teachers in schools reached 1,733,000 in 1955, as against 280,000 in 1914 and 349,000 in 1928. On January 1, 1956, there were 5,553,000 specialists with college and special high education, as against 190,000 in 1914 and 521,000 in 1928. In 1955 the number of students, including correspondence-course students, reached 1,867,000, as against 127,000 in 1914.

Officials and members of the "liberal professions" (clergy, lawyers) predominated among the intelligentsia of pre-revolutionary Russia. The composition of the socialist intelligentsia in the Soviet Union is quite different, with a prevalence of educationists, physicians, scientists and scholars, cultural workers and technologists. Under socialism, the first stage of communist society, social classes do exist. But the relations between the classes have radically changed. The relations between the classes are amicable, having their material basis in the common ownership of the means of production.

The class structure of the population includes both wage earners and members of their families. Of special interest is a more detailed analysis of the grouping of the economically active population, that is those members of society who have an occupation, income and earnings. The nomenclature adopted by UNO, the standard industrial classification of the economically active population, divides the population engaged in the national economy into three groups :

1. Employers : self-employed workers.
2. Salaried employees ; wage-earners.
3. Unpaid family workers.

Not only for the Soviet economy, but also for a true idea of the class structure of any modern society, it is necessary to sub-divide the second group (salaried employees and wage-earners) under two headings—those who really live on their wages, and the bourgeois section of managers, shareholders, and so on.

The conditions of Soviet economy, however, require a more detailed classification, distinguishing the following categories : wage-earners : persons getting their incomes from co-operative enterprise ; unpaid family workers (in personal auxiliary allotments) ; and those employed in their own private enterprise.

Consequently, in calculating the social composition of the economically active population of the USSR, it is necessary to consider both their position in the occupation they follow and the distinction between four types of economy : (a) public State enterprise ; (b) co-operative enterprise ; (c) personal auxiliary allotments ; (d) private enterprise.

The economically active population of the Soviet Union is distributed as follows : * (1) earning wages in State enterprise, 56.1% ; (2) receiving income as members of agricultural co-operatives, 30.1%, and of industrial craft co-operatives, 2.0% ; (3) receiving income as auxiliary family workers on collective farmers' allotments, 7.0%, and on industrial and office-workers' allotments, 4.3% ; (4) receiving income from private enterprise, 0.5%.

Source of income and occupation				Economically active population, 1955	
				Millions	%
1.	Public State enterprise ...	...	...	48.4	56.1
	(wage-earners)				
2.	Co-operative enterprise				
	(income of co-operative members)				
	(a) Agricultural co-operatives ...	...	...	26.0	30.1
	(b) Industrial co-operatives ...	...	...	1.8	2.0
3.	Personal auxiliary enterprise				
	(unpaid family workers)				
	(a) Collective farmers' families ...	...	...	6.0	7.0
	(b) Families of industrial and office workers ...	...	...	3.7	4.3
4.	Private enterprise ...	...	...	0.4	0.5
Total ...				86.3	100.0

In the USSR there is, moreover, a large group receiving educational stipends (students of various educational institutions) and pensions. In 1955 there were 1.2 million college students (correspondence-course students excluded) and 1.7 million students in technical schools, most of whom received State grants.

Income from private enterprise is received today by individual peasant farmers, an insignificant minority of the population.

Co-operative enterprise is represented by agricultural, fishing and industrial craft co-operatives. By the end of 1955 there were 87,500 such enterprises in the USSR, among them 85,700 collective farms. A collective farm [*artel*] is a large enterprise consisting on the average of 229 families and possessing 125 horses, 123 cows, 265 pigs, 940 sheep and 1,700 hectares (over 4,200 acres) of collective sowings.

Personal auxiliary enterprise of collective farmers, industrial and office workers also includes cows and other productive cattle (in definite limited number) and on the small allotments (averaging 1/3 hectare, i.e. 0.83 acres) an orchard and kitchen garden. The work is performed by unpaid family workers, about 11% of the whole economically active population.

The bulk of the economically active population consists of the working class and the intelligentsia.

In 1955 the working class and the intelligentsia, that is the members of society drawing their income as wages within the State economy, were distributed among the branches of the national economy as follows (in thousands) : (1) agriculture (machine and tractor stations and State farms), 5,890 ; (2) industry, 17,362 ; construction, 3,172 ; municipal services and other branches, 3,656 ; (3) transport and communications, 5,658 ; (4) trade, restaurants, credit and social insurance, 4,050 ; (5) education and medical services, 7,209 ; (6) administration in State and public organisations, 1,361 ; (7) total workers and employees, 48,358.

The intelligentsia may be subdivided into the following groups : engineers and technicians, agriculturists and zootechnicians, 19% ; educational, health, scientific, art and cultural workers, 69% ; administrative workers in State, co-operative and public organisations, 12%.

With the progress of technology and the rise in the cultural needs of the population the proportion of intellectuals to the total population also rises—in 1928, 3% ; in 1940, 10.5% ; in 1955, 14.1%.

Therefore the distribution of the working class and the intelligentsia in the

* *The USSR Economy*, p. 190.

main branches of national economy and culture is of unquestionable interest. The classification of the branches of the economy adopted by UNO includes "public services", but does not differentiate out education, health services and municipal services.

Using the international nomenclature, with the qualifications mentioned above, the working class and the intelligentsia of the Soviet Union may be classified according to the various branches of economy and culture as follows : *

Economically active population (wage-earners and salaried employees)
(thousands)

Branches of economy and culture	1928	1940	1955
1. <i>Agriculture</i> (State farms and machine and tractor stations)	345	2,290	5,890
2. <i>Industry and building</i>			
(a) <i>Industry</i>	3,773	10,967	17,362
(b) <i>Construction</i>	723	1,563	3,172
(c) <i>Municipal services and other branches</i> ...	1,704	2,622	3,656
3. <i>Transport and communications</i>	1,365	3,903	5,658
4. <i>Trade, restaurants, credit and social insurance</i> ...	682	3,585	4,050
5. <i>Education and health services</i>	1,188	4,437	7,209
6. <i>Administration of State and public organisations</i>	1,010	1,825	1,361
Total	10,790	31,192	48,358

A detailed breakdown of "public services" shows that the growth does not refer to the whole sphere of services but only to the sphere of culture connected with the reproduction of the labour force and the rise in the cultural level of the population.

In conditions of technical progress, and with a rising material and cultural level in the population, there takes place not only an increase of the intelligentsia in absolute figures, but also a very essential change in its composition, owing to a rise in the relative proportion of educationists, health workers, scientists and scholars, and cultural workers. This is seen from the following table.

Composition of the intelligentsia (excluding families) (%)

	1928	1940	1955
1. <i>Technicians, agriculturists, and zootechnicians</i> ...	13.0	17.0	19.0
2. <i>Educationists, health and cultural workers</i> ...	48.0	59.0	69.0
3. <i>Administrative workers at State, co-operative and public organisations</i>	39.0	24.0	12.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
% of intelligentsia in total population (families included)	3.0	10.5	14.1

In this respect the theory of Colin Clark, author of *The Conditions of Economic Progress*, should be amplified by distinguishing at least four spheres of economy and culture, instead of three "industries".

1. Agriculture and forestry.
2. Manufacturing, building and municipal services.
3. Exchange, transport, communications, trade, etc.
4. Culture and administration.

The rise in the relative proportion of intelligentsia will go hand in hand with the increase in cultural needs. According to Lenin, in the transition to a classless society the social group of specialists will remain as a special stratum until the highest stage of communism has been reached.†

* Table compiled from data in *The USSR Economy*.

† V. I. Lenin. *Works*. Fourth Russian edition, Vol. 33, p. 169.

The raising of the cultural level of the working class and peasantry, a wider application of industrial methods in agriculture, the growth of mechanisation and electrification, the raising of co-operative and collective-farm property to the level of national property—all this ensures the transition of socialist society to classless communist society.

The social boundaries between the classes in the USSR are gradually disappearing. The agricultural work of the collective-farm peasantry is gradually becoming a variety of industrial work. The collective farmers are building their agriculture on an increasing application of the achievements of modern science and technique. The cultural level and needs of the collective farmers are steadily and rapidly growing.

The boundaries between manual and mental work are also gradually disappearing. The distinctions between the working class and the intelligentsia are rapidly diminishing, and the introduction of compulsory ten-year secondary and polytechnical education in towns and cities will still further promote it.

With the introduction of improved technique, skilled workers will have a greater part of their working day devoted to mental instead of physical work. An investigation of the working day of steel workers has shown that 58% of their work-time is taken up with mental work (calculating, checking, estimating the productivity of the equipment) and only 42% with the physical labour of actually performing technological processes, preparing the work-place, and so on.

Members of socialist society working in factories, works, scientific laboratories and in the fields are gradually becoming workers in a single classless communist society.

AS Moscow Letter

A REHEARSAL AT THE MOSCOW ART THEATRE

Ralph Parker

FEW doors in Moscow are as tightly sealed as those of the Moscow Art Theatre during rehearsal. The process of "creating the character", of "finding the inner line", of building up what Stanislavsky called the "inner psychological consistency"—in short, of applying the lessons of the famous System of the great Russian producer whose name is inseparably linked with the Art Theatre—all this is something that actors and producers prefer to do in private.

So when I was invited to attend an early rehearsal of Shakespeare's *A Winter's Tale* at the Moscow Art Theatre I entered the building with the sense of reverential awe one experiences on passing through the doors of a hot-house where specialists are tending delicate orchids and other sensitive plants.

How easy it is to think of theatres as places that spring to life only when the rest of the city has finished its working day! How often had I passed the entrance to the Moscow Art Theatre with its *art nouveau* lettering and chased ironwork, and thought of it as asleep till the bottle-glass doors opened at seven in the evening! Yet when I went there one December morning it was to find no less than four plays being rehearsed in the theatre's "laboratories". And how many of the 170-strong company, to say nothing of the trainees, were privately engaged in the exercises of The System? One can read in the memoirs of old Art Theatre actors how they "lived their parts" outside rehearsals proper. In *My Profession*, Sergei Obraztsov tells how it helped him to grow into the role of Terapot in Offenbach's *La Pécicole*, to act Terapot eating his dinner, visiting an art exhibition, dressing and undressing, in fact *being* Terapot day in, day out, before taking the stage for a few moments. Were those actors I met in the foyer on my way to the rehearsal room being themselves, or were they "living" the parts they had to play in Leonid Leonov's *The Golden Coach* or Turgenev's *Nest of Gentlefolk* or Victor Hugo's *Mary Stuart* or Shakespeare's *A Winter's Tale*, all of which are in rehearsal concurrently at the Moscow Art Theatre?

We climbed to the gallery foyer, then entered a large, square, oak-panelled room with two doors. At one end of the room stood a small table with two chairs, the producer's table; the rest of the room was bare except for a sofa, two hessian-covered screens about five feet by two, and a dozen cane chairs.

Mikhail Kedrov, who for the past ten years has been the chief director of the theatre, rose to meet us. At sixty-three the eminent actor (Sin Bin-u in *The Armoured Train*, Manilov in *Dead Souls*, Karenin in *Anna Karenina*) made it clear to us that it was an "almost unprecedented exception" for vulgar eyes to be allowed to see an early rehearsal.

"We are in the second stage of rehearsing *A Winter's Tale*", he explained as a preliminary. "First we met together to discover the meaning of the play. What did we find in *A Winter's Tale*, a play which, because of its peculiar structure—two plays in one, you might say—presents difficulties that few theatres find it within their means to produce? We found a tale of jealousy as acute as that of *Othello*, love as ardent as that of *Romeo and Juliet*, tragic moments as moving as those of *King Lear*, and much pure comedy.

"Now we have reached the stage of exploring the actor's feelings, individually, and, what is more important, in relation to those of the other actors. The 'sense of communion of feeling' is something peculiar to the theatre of

Stanislavsky. From its earliest days our theatre has demanded of its members not merely a good performance but the blending of each individual performance into a single whole, and this unity between the actors on the stage can be attained only if each actor reacts logically and *truthfully* to the playing of his fellow actors. That, in fact, is what acting means. The actor must always be *active*. Action is the very essence of drama."

As Kedrov spoke, a tall, beautiful young woman with a long black cloak of some thin material over her everyday clothes entered the room through the door facing us. This was Lyubov Pushkaryova, who is cast for the role of Hermione, "daughter of the Emperor of Russia" and Queen of Sicily, the wife of Leontes, who wrongly suspects her of adultery with Polixenes, King of Bohemia. We were to see her rehearsing the scenes where her husband accuses her of infidelity and where she is put on trial and vindicated by the Delphic Oracle.

The actress reclined on the sofa. Mamillius, her son in the play, was absent. A single lady-in-waiting stood beside her. The rehearsal began, though not before Kedrov had turned to us and sternly bidden us observe the strictest silence. "Even the sound of pencil on paper is enough to disturb an actor creating his role."

And now, in some miraculous way, Lyubov Pushkaryova has become Hermione, though she has no make-up or costume, no scenery or proscenium arch to assist her. None the less she is the queen, soon to be delivered of a child, resting and listening languidly to "a sad tale best for Winter". In the ante-room there is a sudden disturbance, so natural that for a moment I thought some quarrel had broken out between the actors waiting to enter. But no, Leontes bursts in, angrily searching for Polixenes. Slowly, reluctantly, Hermione realises the gravity of the charge her husband is bringing against her. Her incredulity turns to indignation, to disgust, to that *honourable grief . . . which burns Worse than tears drown*.

"We will go straight on to the trial scene", said Kedrov. "I will reserve my comments till later." During the scene he had been jotting down notes on sheets of paper. I noticed that while Hermione was speaking her lines he had not been watching her so much as her lady-in-waiting and the lords attendant on the king.

"You should imagine", Kedrov said to us, "that the following scene is attended with all the majesty of the law. The judge enters, preceded by the executioner carrying his axe. An air of solemnity reigns over the court. All this is necessarily absent from this rehearsal. Our task now is to seek the 'inner line'."

King Leontes—played by the experienced actor Mikhail Bolduman—enters the room. Hermione is led in; the charge of high treason is read out. The queen defends herself; Leontes is adamant. And even when the trial reaches its dénouement with the reading of the message of the Delphic Oracle, Leontes defies it. Angry Apollo strikes with thunder and earthquake; queen and prince perish, and then comes that tremendous moment of drama when the wife of one of the lords attendant on the king comes forward defiantly and accuses the king of tyranny.

But, O thou Tyrant,
Do not repent these things, for they are heavier
Than all thy woes can stir: therefore betake thee
To nothing but despair. A thousand knees,
Ten thousand years together, naked, fasting,
Upon a barren mountain, and still winter
In storm perpetual, could not move the Gods
To look that way thou wert.

The rehearsal was over. The court of justice in Sicily became a square oak-panelled room on the top floor of the Moscow Art Theatre. The repentant

king and his shocked subjects became hardworking actors waiting for the producer's verdict.

"Well, as usual I shall ask you how you feel", said Kedrov. "How do you feel?" He turned to Bolduman.

"How do you feel?" For we are in the laboratory of emotions. Another producer than Kedrov might have started his comments immediately, without this inquiry about how the executants themselves "felt" about the complicated play of emotions in the creation of a role, might have spoken of gesture, intonation, grouping. But did not Stanislavsky write that "words, gestures, movements which fly past real emotion, like an express train past local stops, are barren"? How, he asks in *My Life in Art*, how can one force the emotions to leave their secret hiding-places and take the initiative of creation into their hands?

For the next half-hour Kedrov helped the actors to "feel the truth, the inner justification" of their roles, by a detailed examination of his notes. Shakespeare, he said, requires passion. He is not Chekhov. His text seethes with passion, and therefore the actor must beware of pauses—so effective in acting Chekhov—which can dangerously "lower the temperature" of a Shakespearian text. Further, the lines are full of conflict, and if conflict is to be sincere and effective it must not be one-sided. Acting is like boxing. The actor strives to make every one of his blows "tell"; moreover, each of his blows is conditioned by the counterblow of his opponent. "Sincerity and conflict—that should be our motto."

Turning to the minor characters, Kedrov criticised in detail their reactions to the swiftly changing moments of the full-blooded drama. "It is not our way to play Shakespeare in such a manner that when the main character speaks all the rest merely listen. All must act, all the time." And he spent some time on coaching the actors who play the silent roles of ladies-in-waiting and lords-in-attendance on how they should by gesture and expression alone show their protest to the tyrant Leontes. Indeed, on this occasion Kedrov seemed to be paying more attention to these minor characters than to the leading players.

Many months will pass before *A Winter's Tale* opens on the stage of the Moscow Art Theatre. Costumes and scenery have still to be designed, incidental music has to be composed.

Yet, one felt on leaving the theatre that day, are these superficial additions really necessary? Can dramatic truth be any further heightened beyond the point it attained as we sat among those actors in that bare room? Is it not the logical development of the Stanislavsky system to forgo elaborate scenic effects? That, certainly, is the line of thought of some Moscow producers today. Shortly before his death, Tairov experimented with a production of Chekhov's *The Seagull* played against plain drapes without make-up. Okhlopkov's *The Aristocrats* is an attempt in a different manner to dispense with scenery. The Moscow Art Theatre has not taken this step, yet in concert performances of scenes from its productions Muscovites often have an opportunity of seeing actors from this company playing with complete conviction on a bare stage. An hour or two spent in the "creative laboratory" of the Moscow Art Theatre is sufficient to suggest that although scenically this famous company may have ceased to contribute anything very new to the living art of the theatre, it continues to train actors in a method that demands complete fidelity to the truth of the text and a convincing and sincere communication of emotion to the spectator—and without these things no production, however original, however contemporary in presentation, can be successful.

SOVIET DISCUSSIONS ON MANAGEMENT OF INDUSTRY

AN extremely important public discussion began in the USSR on March 30 this year, when the central committee of the Communist Party and the Council of Ministers published draft proposals for the reorganisation of the management of industry, to be presented by N. S. Khrushchov to the Supreme Soviet.

The principles underlying these proposals had already been adopted by the central committee of the Communist Party on February 14, and published two days later. Essentially they amount to this—that the vast development of industry in Soviet economy, and the existence nowadays of very large numbers of experienced business organisers and technical personnel, made it both desirable and possible to effect a large-scale decentralisation of management of the 200,000 industrial establishments and 100,000 building sites, while retaining the system of state planning.

For this purpose it was proposed to transfer the control of most industrial undertakings—except in certain branches—from specialised Ministries in the Union and Republic Governments, such as exist today, to Regional Economic Councils—abolishing the Ministries concerned. At the same time the functions of overall supervision exercised by the State Planning Commission of the USSR would be extended, and it would be given certain executive powers which at present it does not possess. The governments of the USSR and of its component Republics would consequently undergo a marked change in structure.

Throughout April the Soviet newspapers devoted many pages every week to the discussion of the proposals. Contributors ranged from ordinary factory workers and technicians to directors of the biggest works, and included members of the central and Republic governments. A wide range of opinion was expressed, with considerable divergencies on such questions as whether a Central Economic Council would be necessary, what Ministries should be retained, in what areas Regional Councils should be set up, and so forth. Reports from factories and extracts from the local press bore witness to the nation-wide scale of the discussion. In the trade union press a parallel discussion—of the consequential changes which might be required in trade union organisation, such as the creation of powerful regional trades councils—also developed.

The decisive—but by no means final—stage in the discussion was reached at the Supreme Soviet session held on May 7-10. A law was adopted directing the formation of Regional Economy Councils, to be set up by the Supreme Soviets of the Union Republics, abolishing a large number of Ministries and granting extended powers to a reorganised State Planning Committee. At the end of May the Republics began holding sessions of their Supreme Soviets, which adopted legislation to set up the Economic Councils—seventy in the RSFSR, eleven in the Ukraine, and so on.

We hope to be able to give a comprehensive survey of the discussion in the next issue of the *ANGLO-SOVIET JOURNAL*, together with an account of the economic legislation in this and other fields; as well as of other laws, concerned with the status of the individual and his civil liberties, which have encouraged personal initiative in public affairs.

Book Reviews

SOVIET FACTS AND FIGURES

The USSR Economy: A Statistical Abstract.
(Lawrence and Wishart, 1957. pp. 264. 21s.)

FOR twenty years there has been no published Soviet statistical abstract, and the student of Soviet economy has suffered accordingly. The last was in 1936, a very full compilation of over 500 pages, translated into English under the title of *Socialist Construction in USSR: a statistical abstract*. In 1956 appeared the volume of which the above is an English translation. Compared with its predecessor it is a slender volume, of no more than 262 pages in the original (but with a print of 100,000), and there remain some important gaps in it that we had hoped to see filled. But for the information it does contain we are most grateful, as we are grateful also for the end that it marks (we hope) to the statistical reticence of the period of war and cold war—a reticence that benefited mainly the sceptics and critics (not to mention the tribe of estimate-mongers who have flourished so vigorously, especially across the Atlantic).

There are eight main sections: the first a general section covering geographical and demographic data and some of the main economic indices bearing on production, productivity and national income: the others dealing respectively with industry, agriculture, capital construction, transport and communications, employment, trade, culture and public health. There is finally a short section, virtually an appendix, of a dozen pages summarising data on population, land area and capital cities of the countries of the world.

It has been a common complaint of critics that instead of quantity-figures of output we have had in the past only indices, or percentages, of output-changes. This complaint has

never been completely justified: there have always been output-figures for main products like coal, iron, steel, oil, cotton textiles and footwear, outside the war years. But it is true that the list has not been extensive and the gaps have been important enough to preclude the construction of continuous series. In an industry like engineering, products are sufficiently heterogeneous and varying to make it inevitable that one should rely on value-aggregate. We now have, in the industry section, a list of 85 items for which data are given in physical units for 1913, 1928, 1932, 1937, 1940, 1950, 1954 and 1955. For a shorter list of main products, such as pig-iron, steel, coal, oil and electricity, there are output-figures (e.g. in tonnage) for all years since 1928 other than the war years. The coal figures distinguish brown coal from bituminous, and reveal that between a quarter and a third of the total figure usually quoted consists of brown coal. Output of tractors since 1925 is given both in physical units and in conventional 15h.p. units, thereby clearing up the puzzle of the relation between the two series which were variously cited in the last ten years (the relation between them, incidentally, being today 1:2). A fact of some interest revealed by this series is the sharp fall in tractor-production after 1936 in the years of rearmament (from 113,000 in 1936 to 31,000 in 1940), the smaller drop once again on the outbreak of the Korean war, and then a steady climb from 1952 onwards. Motor-car production is separated into lorries and light passenger cars (the latter composing nearly a quarter of the whole, compared with one-tenth in 1937 and less than five per cent in 1940). In

footwear, rubber and leather shoes are distinguished (clearing up another puzzle in the statistics for certain past years). An important remaining gap is non-ferrous metals.

In the case of tractors and machine-tools, in addition to output-figures there are figures of the total stock ("park") in use (and similarly in agriculture for grain combines, and separately for the main types of agricultural machinery). An interesting table of the grouping of industrial enterprises by size brings out the fact that nine-tenths of enterprises have less than 500 workers and under six per cent of them over 1,000 workers (although the latter group embraces more than a half of all industrial workers). Gross industrial production is given in index-number form for all years since 1925, and previous to this for 1913, 1917 and 1921, together with a breakdown of this into capital goods and consumer goods industries (groups A and B) and also the main branches of industry; but there is no reference to the bases on which the indices have been compiled. Here, and also in several other places, space is occupied by converting indices from their initial base-year (1913) to a succession of later years (namely 1928, 1940 and 1950). This of course saves the reader some arithmetic if he wants to express output in recent years as a percentage of any of those years; but it affords no additional information and seems to represent some confusion of purpose as between a statistical abstract and a popular handbook.

For agriculture there is very detailed information about collective and State farms and about machine and tractor stations, and details of the tractor park (now over three-quarters of a million) and the combine park; also pretty full details about livestock, going back to 1928 and including a comparison with 1916 both in present frontiers of the USSR and in pre-1939 frontiers (these figures revealing quite frankly the continuing failure of cows to recover to the 1928 level and the failure of the total figure for large horned cattle to do so until 1955). This makes all the more surprising the absence of any crop figures; these being given only as indices (of barn crop) and since 1950. Thus, while we know that grain in 1955 was 29% above 1950, we are not told officially what the barn crop actually was for 1950 or for 1955.

This, together with the absence of any figures of wage-earnings (which are similarly given in index-form only, and since 1940), is the most serious gap in this volume, and one that we sincerely hope will before long be filled.

On the other hand, a welcome innovation is the inclusion of price-indices for State retail trade and for the *kolkhos* market (although no general index for all retail sales). These are given for 1950 to

1955 compared with 1940 as the base-year also for price-movements of particular products since 1947), and show for 1955 a figure of 138 (1940=100) for the former, and for the latter in 1955 no more than 111.

Apart from figures of total population (its territorial division, social composition and also sizes of large towns), crude birth- and death-rates are given for 1913, 1926, 1940 and from 1950. These show that between 1926 and 1940 the birth-rate fell by about a third, but the death-rate scarcely at all; it is since 1940 that the most marked fall in the death-rate (from 18.3 to 8.4) has occurred, the birth-rate continuing to fall although more slowly than before. Since data about age-composition are lacking, and there are not even any separate figures for infant mortality, one cannot analyse the reasons for these movements any further. (A fall in birth-rates is, of course, a common feature of increased urbanisation; the fall in death-rates is no doubt a combined product of improved public health and changed age-composition, in what proportions exactly we cannot tell from the data.) The annual rate of increase of the population remains at a level of about 1.7%, or very slightly above the 1913 level.

In the section on capital construction, in addition to figures of annual capital investment since 1928 (expressed in prices of July 1955), there is also information about urban house-building and about the urban "housing fund" (measured in square metres of dwelling space). The latter is shown to have increased by about three times since 1926. Meantime the urban population rather more than trebled; which explains why housing remains one of the most serious problems, and the "housing fund" *per capita* of urban population remains at scarcely more than seven square metres. Urban population today amounts to 43% of total population, compared with less than 18% in 1926 and in 1913; wage and salary earners today comprising substantially more than half the occupied population.

The publishers are to be congratulated on their enterprise in making this volume available in English, and so promptly. The translators have appended a useful set of explanatory notes. Unfortunately the original (unlike its 1936 predecessor) was unprovided with an index, although it has an eight-page table of contents at the front.

M.H.D.

BRIEF NOTICES

STUDIES IN REBELLION. E. Lampert. (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 30s.)

A very well written and readable work, consisting of three long and shrewd studies of the life, character and achievements of Belinsky, Bakunin and Herzen. The essay on Herzen is particularly absorbing and moving.

GOGOL. David Magarshack. (*Faber and Faber*, 36s.)

A very well produced book, beautifully printed and finely illustrated with twenty-four full-page plates. The biography is clear and straightforward and the translations (by the author) are admirable. The mournful description of Gogol's death is interesting in that it indicates that rare form of suicide, sheer determination not to live longer, and reminds one of Charlotte Brontë on Emily, *she makes haste to leave us*.

PLUTONIA. V. A. Obruchev. (*Lawrence and Wishart*, 15s.)

Though this is a "possible-impossible" exploration story somewhat in the Jules Verne tradition, it barely comes within that rumbustious category "Sci-Fic", being too explicit and realistic for such feverish goings-on. It is truer, perhaps, to see it as developing from Defoe's *Crusoe* with just a filip from Verne and Wells. The story holds the attention, with too little help from subdued style and pedestrian structure.

RUSSIAN POETRY 1917-1955. Selected, translated and introduced by Jack Lindsay. (*The Bodley Head*, 15s.)

An excellent representative collection of 100 poems, in four sections—the Civil War and the twenties; the thirties; the war; after the war. The first part is a good deal longer than the others; one poet, Tikhonov, appears in all four parts, with a total of fifteen poems, eight of them in the first part. It is not clear whether this preponderance reflects the poet's output or the translator's choice. In general this is a very worth-while selection, giving a good idea of Soviet poetic talent. In the main the wartime poems are weaker than the rest.

NOTE

Mr. V. Starovsky, director of the Central Statistical Board of the USSR, has been kind enough (in a letter of April 15) to settle some uncertainty as to the meaning of "housing floor space", tables for which are given on pp. 162 and 164, and to which the translators draw attention on p. 264.

"Housing floor space" includes both that of living rooms and that of other accommodation in apartments and hostels, e.g. kitchens, corridors, etc.

But it does not include the space in blocks of dwellings which is not intended for use as such (shops, kindergartens and crèches, laundries, caretakers' offices, recreation rooms, and likewise vestibules, enclosed porches, landings, etc).

The above applies equally to the speeches made by N. A. Bulganin and N. S. Khrushchov at the twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Sir,

In his interesting article on the Bolshoi Theatre Ballet your contributor "V.K." says that the dance "Toys of Viatka" is based on the Russian puppet theatre. This is not so. The "toys" of Viatka are the little clay ornaments, humans and animals, which are painted in gorgeously fantastic colours by the peasants and which take their place as "primitive" handicrafts alongside the highly refined peasant art of Palekh. As a "Viatka fan" myself I trust that this confusion with the puppet theatre will be corrected.

Yours sincerely,

PAT SLOAN.

Secretary, British Soviet Friendship Society.

CORRECTION

On page 33 of our last issue (Vol. XVIII, No. 1), column 2, line 32, the word "no" was omitted. The sentence should read: "Their impressive vigour and drive come across no less convincingly than their baseness and greed." We apologise to Mr. Pearce for this careless reversal of his meaning.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

CAPITAL, Vol. II. Karl Marx. (*FLPH and Lawrence and Wishart*, 7s. 6d.)

CAPITALISM IN RUSSIA, THE DEVELOPMENT OF. V. I. Lenin. (*Lawrence and Wishart*, 9s. 6d.)

GOVERNMENT, THE SOVIET SYSTEM OF. J. N. Hazard. (*Chicago U.P. and Cambridge U.P.*, 30s.)

IN THE COURT OF PUBLIC OPINION Alger Hiss. (*John Calder*, 25s.)

LOAF SUGAR, AND OTHER SOVIET STORIES. (*Lawrence and Wishart*, 12s. 6d.)

LONG DAY IN A SHORT LIFE. A. Albert Maltz. (*John Calder*, 18s.)

MODERN RUSSIA. John Long. (*Gerald Duckworth*, 10s. 6d.)

OXFORD SLAVONIC PAPERS. Vol. VII. (*Clarendon Press*, 18s.)

PAVLOV, IVAN P. Harry K. Wells. (Pavlov and Freud, I. *Lawrence and Wishart*, 21s.)

PSYCHOLOGY IN THE SOVIET UNION. Ed. Brian Simon. (*Routledge and Kegan Paul*, 32s.)

WAR AND PEACE. L. N. Tolstoy. Tr. Rosemary Edwards. 2 Vols. (*Penguin Classics*, 7s. 6d. vol.)

WHAT DOES THE WEST WANT? George Catlin. (*Phanix House, Back-ground Books*, 10s. 6d.)

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